

Volume 32, No. 1 January 2000

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Carolina country

Why we like where we live

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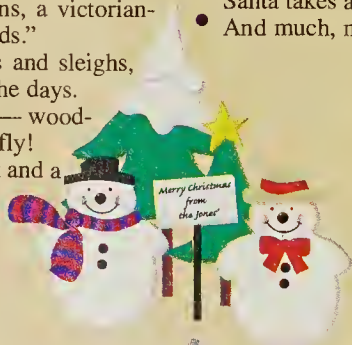
IF YOU LIKE TO CUT PATTERNS OUT OF WOOD, THIS IS THE SET FOR YOU! YOU'LL FIND A TREASURE HOUSE OF IDEAS INSIDE. 412 BEAUTIFUL WOODWORKING PATTERNS AND DESIGNS.

(By Frank K. Wood)

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- Wooden furniture for patio and porch.
- Stylish reindeer will give your yard a festive holiday touch.
- "Garden golfer" whirls all day long, while works of art bless your hearth and home.
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- Large outdoor patterns add seasonal fun, create delightful kitchen gadgets and household helpers for everyone.
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- A 3-D village, sleepytime rabbit and a frog that hangs out over your

- door.
- Noah's ark toy, a garland for teacher, clever animal notepad keepers.
- An adorable armoire and baby cradle, dressing screen, and a tree-top table.
- Classy corner shelves, handy peg racks, decorative vine and animals that shine.
- Unique intarsia patterns, dazzling sunflower birdhouse clock.
- A cabinet for your TV and VCR, western wranglers for your little buckaroo.
- Child-size "teddy bear" chair, santa pull-toy, kids can ride away on a galloping horse!
- Pretty birds, curious cats and bouncing bunnies frolic among wooden sunflowers.
- Playful piglet shelf-sitters and a caboodle of koalas from down under!
- Outdoor snow couple in their Sunday best; Santa takes a much needed rest.
- And much, much more!



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IMPORTANT — FREE GIFT OFFER EXPIRES FEBRUARY 19, 2000

All orders mailed by February 19, 2000, will receive a free gift, "50 Special, Seasonal, Woodworking Patterns," guaranteed. Order right away!

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"We're so positive that Roach Kill will kill every last roach in your house that we'll send you a free gift just for trying it."

"Roaches!"

I HAD THEM BY THE HUNDREDS, BUT NOW I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE ROACH.

(By J. Robson)

Have you ever seen a roach run out of a bowl as you were about to put food in it? Well, I have. Just turn out the lights and an army of roaches would attack the whole house.

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Features

First Person 6

Introducing a new section of the magazine where we all can express our opinions, ideas, questions, answers, thrills, heartaches, frustrations and sense of humor. Especially touching this month is Mickey Slack's letter to "A Hero of the Here and Now," his friend Ray Jenkins of Union Electric.

Home Sweet Home 16

It's easy to tell from your stories about "the best place to live in North Carolina" that home is where the heart is. We begin our third year of the "Nothing Could Be Finer Series."

The Wonders of Oyster Farming 20

Aquaculture specialist Rebecca Dunning tells how Jim and Bonnie Swartzenberg get the spat to attach to cultch in their upwellers. It all helps restore health to our coastal oyster population.

We Picked and Sang Our Way 24

In the 1940s, musicians from North Carolina's mountains performed through the miracle of radio on the Farm Hour program out of Asheville and paved the way for country and bluegrass popularity. Al Wall was one of them. [Not in all editions]

Horse Country Comes to Saxapahaw 26

Jordan Properties figures out a way to "renovate" a historic dairy farm. [Not in all editions]



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MORE POWER TO YOU 12

North Carolina's electric cooperatives have proposed a solution for addressing the problem of "stranded debt" that municipal utilities would face in a deregulated electric service market. Charles W. Terrill, the CEO of the co-ops' statewide power supply cooperative, explains "a cooperative solution to a North Carolina problem." . . . Also: Two eastern North Carolina cooperatives consider merging.

CAROLINA CLOSE-UP 28

Some new books, music, exhibits, and an auction rover.

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On the Cover

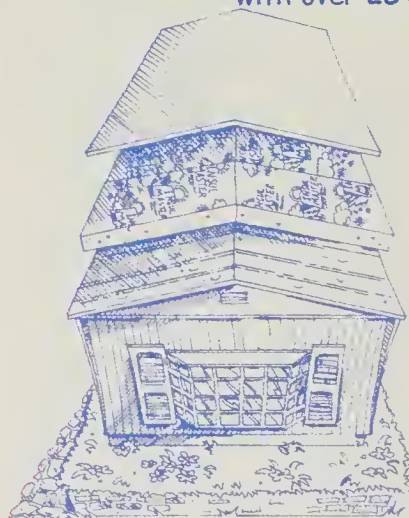
Detail from "Watauga," a painting by Richard Tumbleston, commissioned by the Watauga County Sesquicentennial Committee to commemorate the county's 150th year in 1999 and to benefit local causes. The Dougherty House on Kraut Creek in Boone was the home of the brothers who founded Watauga Academy in 1899. The sycamore clinging to the bank looks into a stream of the Watauga's "mountain memories." Prints are available (image size is 11 3/4 by 21 1/2 inches) for \$75 (signed and numbered) and \$150 (Watauga County Sesquicentennial and county seals edition). Contact Tumbleston Studio, P.O. Box 1243, Boone, NC 28607. Phone: (828) 264-7147.



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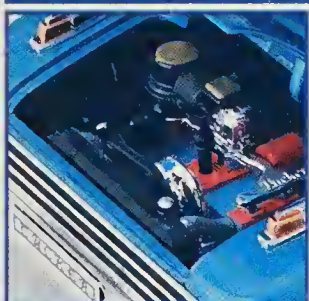
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Incredible Details!



Check out the tread on the spare tire and the matching luggage loaded in the trunk.

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first person

Carolina Country staff (standing, from left) art director Leisha Hodgson, assistant editor Renee C. Gannon, editor Michael E.C. Gery; (seated, from left) advertising manager Jennifer Boedart Hoey, associate editor Kim W. Tripp, business coordinator Jenny Lloyd.



Among my friends who help me see the Big Picture is Mark Zenick. We can't visit each other regularly, so mostly he writes me long letters. He puts aside an hour or so and writes in long-hand about the world, the weather, people we know in common, his family, his unswerving faith in God, peace and quiet.

Mark works for a land trust that he organized. He helps farm families, landowners and towns save properties as permanent farmland, or as vistas that generations can enjoy, as businesses that are borne by and for their communities, as refuges for wildlife. He tirelessly helps to balance his church, financially and spiritually. In spring and summer he and his wife, Marie, raise daylilies to sell from their farm, called New Hope. He built a little cabin on that farm where he retreats alone to produce intricate drawings in his own pointillist style, and to write those long-hand letters. The place is warmed by a woodstove and lit by oil lamps.

I've decided to send Carolina Country to Mark, because I realize he needs it. He is one of many who are overwhelmed by technology. In fact, he says he feels removed from the "preoccupations of my brothers and sisters" who have embraced or otherwise work with today's technology.

"If it takes no longer to type a letter which is posted off to the circulatory system of the U.S. Mail than it does to type a letter which is destined for instant e-mail transmission," he wrote to me recently, "why are fewer letters being carried by 'snail mail?'"

Here we go, I thought.

"Can it have to do with the letter sender's desire for the instant gratification of dispatching words immediately," he goes on, "of anticipating that sent thoughts will be read much sooner than the several days it will take the U.S. Mail to deliver a stamped envelope with the letter inside? Doesn't it boil down to a wish to triumph over Time? Does it have anything to do with an existential greed [here, I can't tell if he wrote 'greed' or 'need'] to squeeze in more and more between the risings and settings of the sun, compacting more delineated experience into the Time we are allowed as mortal players? I fear this subtle, unrelenting cultural effort to try to conquer Time can only erode the beaches of our shared humanness. Our 'tools,' heralded as liberators of human creativity and resourcefulness, may well be enslaving our capacity for transcendence, for whole-

Trusting that we will make it into the year 2000 in one piece, Carolina Country introduces this new section of the magazine, "First Person." It's meant to be a place where we all can tell personal stories, offer advice and opinions, ask dumb questions or tough questions and give answers, laugh a little and accept some sadness. In the tradition of the cooperatives who publish Carolina Country, "First Person" places your interests first.

For more than 50 years, Carolina Country has come into your homes and businesses as a trusted companion. Our mission is to enrich the lives of your families and communities, to help you understand the work of your cooperatives, and to convey your ideas, experiences and achievements to the rest of the cooperative family. While the events, technology and pace that accompany our entry into this new century sometimes tend to overwhelm us, maybe Carolina Country's "First Person" can be a place to help us comprehend and appreciate it all.

Send us your thoughts any way you can.

some stillness. Are we any healthier, any happier, any more fulfilled because of the technological ability to send, store and manipulate unimaginable mountains of information? I don't think so. . . ."

Well, I always thank Goodness for people like Mark. They make sure that a conscience participates in the march of human progress.

I myself grab Time, from time to time, to argue with Mark in long-hand. I tell him that technology, e-mail, the Internet, satellites, the telephone, the ink pen, even paper all help me and many others communicate more fluidly, more creatively and with greater strength, conviction and soul than ever before. I say that the world has become a kinder, gentler place now that we can get to know each other so much sooner and deeper than we could even a year ago.

In this month's magazine, we see evidence of all this. The combined miracles of electronic communication, medical technology and human spiritual ties added a peaceful happiness to the death of Ray Jenkins that he may not otherwise have known (page 9). Research into aquaculture allows people like Bonnie and Jim Swartzenberg to help restore health to the coast's oyster population (page 20). Al Wall says the introduction of electricity to the Carolina countryside in the 1940s lifted immeasurably the spirits and fortunes of mountain music and musicians (page 24, not in all editions).

When country people formed cooperatives in the 1940s in order to extend electricity to their communities, they also committed themselves to publishing a magazine to inform members about new technology and what it can do for their lives. We are still at it.

Today, it's not just the technology that changes almost daily. The whole business of making and delivering energy is changing. We are here to help you understand and appreciate that this new era can work wonders for us all, and that cooperatives embody "the power of human connections" as it happens.

If you believe, as my friend Marks believes, that "our shared humanness" has a superior strength and meaning, pay attention to your cooperative. Cooperatives are of and for the people who form them and keep them alive. Today, they are the human face of the business.

Michael E.C. Gery
Editor

The citron melon

A reader asked us to find out something about the citron melon. Here's what we learned.

The citron melon is a close relative of the watermelon. The fruits resemble watermelons and are round to oval, 6 to 12 inches long, light green with darker green stripes and have a smooth surface. The pale, white flesh tastes like the rind of a typical watermelon. Fresh citron melons are considered inedible. These melons are so tough they can be bounced on the floor with little chance of bursting.



The citron melon grows as a weed in California and can infest annual crops, orchards, vineyards, roadsides, ditchbanks and sandy, dry river or creek beds. It is a low, vining plant which can spread a great deal. It is especially undesirable where watermelons are grown because the two plants readily hybridize. One plant may produce up to 100 fruits.

The citron melon is also called "preserving melon" because the fruit rind is used in preserves, jellies and to make pickles or preserves. Because of its high pectin content, it is added to fruit juices to make them jell more rapidly. Also, the candied "citron" sold in many American stores is often made from the citron melon rather than from the peel of the citrus fruit, citron, which is more expensive and has a more distinctive flavor.

Sometimes citron melons are used to feed to hogs or livestock, but it is rarely grown commercially anymore.



A jewel

The November issue of Carolina Country is a jewel from front to back. You all really did a splendid job, and I am keeping this delightful issue. Not only the good recipes are appreciated, but the favorite holiday memories are so beautiful, touching and with a hint of humor. What a good idea. Keep it up.

Congratulations to all of you there in my beloved Raleigh.

Marion S. Morgan
Statesville

Soap chips and deer

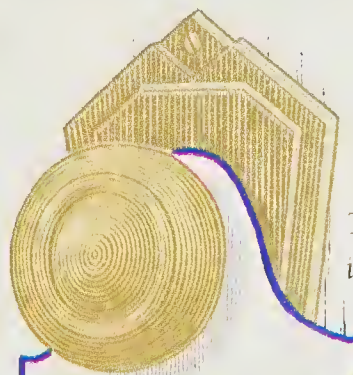
Deer have devastated my perennial border. So far the best deterrent we have found is soap chips -- Irish Spring soap run through the meat slicer. It keeps them away for a few weeks.



I make sure that the Master Gardeners of Cumberland County have "Hank's Gardening Guide" column in the archives every month. Thanks for all the information.

Kay C. Sheets

Editor's Note: To see Hank Smith's gardening advice for any season, visit our Web site at www.CarolinaCountry.com



HOME REMEDIES

Here is a new section of good ideas. These came from electric co-op members in South Dakota. Send us yours.

Sock your shoes

If you do much traveling, cover your shoes with old socks. This will protect your shoes and your clothing.

Lucile Stirling, Parkston
Turner-Hutchinson Electric Cooperative

Ironing pad potpourri

Sprinkle your favorite potpourri under your ironing pad. Every time you iron, the clothes and room will smell nice.

Linda Rasmussen, Vermillion
Clay-Union Electric Corporation

Ask the Lighting Bug

Does an electric eel discharge real electricity?

As a young adult who had just finished college, I visited Disney World in Orlando with my parents. As we were enjoying our walk around the huge, circular, indoor display of marine life, a young girl and her mother directly behind us were taking in the incredible sights. The girl said enthusiastically, "Look, Mother. An electric eel!"

Her mother replied casually, "Oh, I'm sure it's a real one, dear."

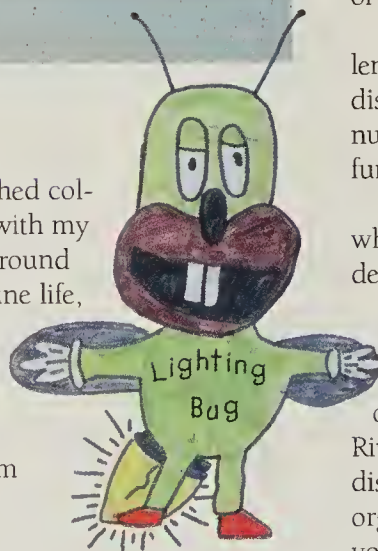
Anita Burkhardt
Brevard

Lighting Bug says

Electric eels emit an electric charge of direct current like a battery does. Large electric eels can emit a charge stronger than a typical electric farm fence, and because it's likely to be surrounded by water, which conducts electricity, the shocking effect would be even greater.

Here is a description excerpted from an encyclopedia. (Reprinted with permission from Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia. Copyright © 1999 by PRIMEDIA Reference, Inc. All rights reserved. Funk & Wagnall's New Encyclopedia is available online at www.funkandwagnalls.com)

Electric fish is the common name for several unrelated fishes that emit electrical discharges. The organs adapted for this purpose consist of groups of highly compact nerve endings. For example, in small so-called electric eels (which are not true eels), a typical nerve-ending cell is about 0.1 mm (about 0.04 in) long and has an electric voltage of 0.14 volts. The



average small electric eel has about 230 of these nerve-ending cells per cm (0.4 in) of length, and is capable of developing 30 to 32 volts per cm, or slightly more than 75 volts per inch. These cells are concentrated in the tail, which occupies about four-fifths of the total length of the fish.

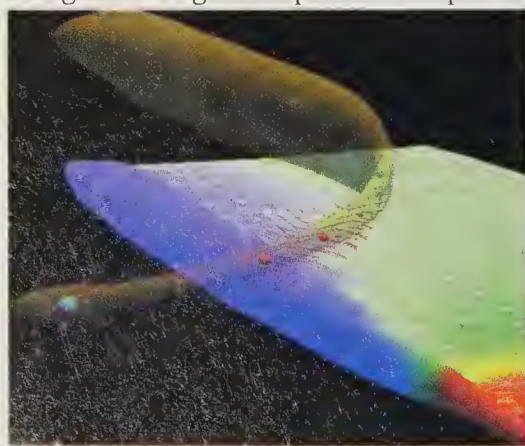
Large electric eels have fewer nerve-ending cells per unit of length, but each cell is larger. They are capable of emitting a discharge of 450 to 600 volts. If the organs are exhausted from numerous discharges in a short interval, they will not resume function until they have had sufficient rest.

Discharges are emitted by electric fish to stun their prey while hunting; they are also emitted in self-defense, in the detection of prey and obstacles, and in navigation.

The most important electric fishes are the electric eels, the electric catfish, and the electric rays. The most powerful discharge is emitted by the electric eel, *Electrophorus electricus*, of the family Electrophoridae, which is native to the Orinoco River and the rivers of the Amazon Basin in South America. The discharge organs of this fish include a small so-called pilot organ, which continuously emits electricity, and a large high-voltage organ that supplies most of the power to the intermittent discharges. The electric eel is capable of stunning large animals with its shock.

The electric catfish, *Malapterurus electricus*, of the Congo and Nile basins, emits weaker discharges than does the eel and has a discharging mechanism slightly different from that of the eel. Its electric shock organ consists of a membrane of nerve endings that extends over the entire back.

The electric rays of the family Torpedinidae are found in oceans in many parts of the world. A typical genus of this family is *Torpedo*, common in many parts of Europe. Fish of this genus have two electric discharge organs between the head and pectoral fins.



Your favorite jokes

Here are some jokes sent in by one of our favorite readers from Elizabeth City. Send us yours.

Plain Jane

A certain little girl, when asked her name, would reply, "I'm Mr. Sugarbrown's daughter."

Her mother told her this was wrong, and she should say, "I'm Jane Sugarbrown."

The vicar spoke to the girl in Sunday School and said, "Aren't you Mr. Sugarbrown's daughter?"

She replied, "I thought I was, but my mother says I'm not."

So Keep the Singing Down

Later, as the Sunday School teacher led her little pupils to church service, she asked them, "And why is it necessary to be quiet in church?"

Little Jane replied, "Because people are sleeping."

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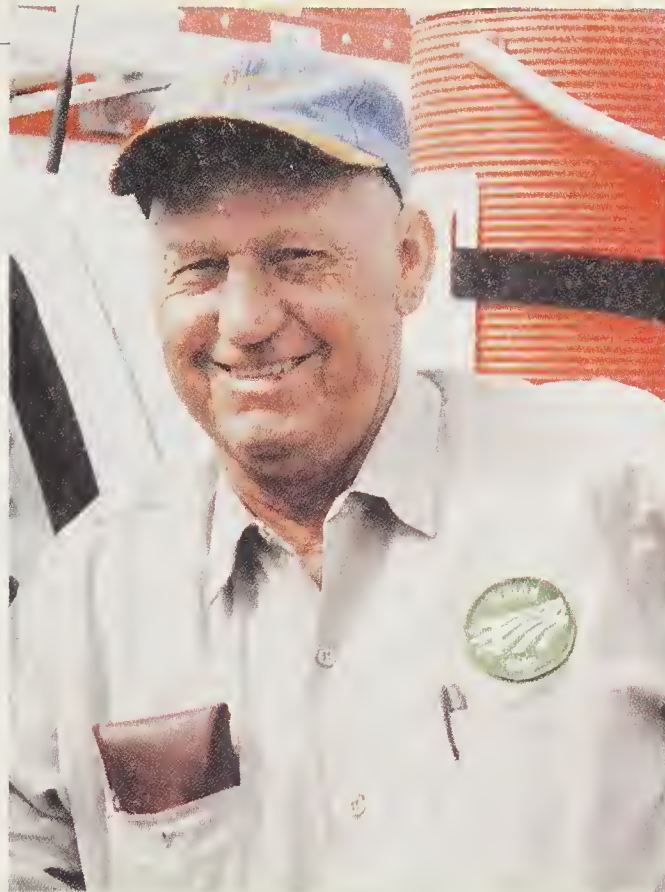
The Power of Human Connections

Ray Jenkins, overhead line construction supervisor with Union Electric in Monroe, was diagnosed with cancer last year. To no one's surprise, he faced his fortune with dignity, faith and good humor. During the year, he also inspired Union Electric's annual crusade for cancer research.

In May, Mr. Jenkins felt good enough to lead the co-op's walk for the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life. "I give so much credit for my recovery to my co-workers," he said then. "I have always looked at them as brothers and sisters, but now they are my angels." The co-op raised \$16,000 to help people suffering with cancer.

In November, Union Electric staff held a dinner to honor Mr. Jenkins for his 20 years of service to the co-op. He beamed throughout the evening. He was in Hospice care at home in Polkton with his wife, Barbara, his daughters and their families. And on Dec. 4, he died.

A few months earlier, one of his co-workers, Mickey Slack, a meter reader with Union Electric's subsidiary, Union Services and Telecommunications, composed a tribute for Mr. Jenkins. The sentiments meant a great deal to Ray Jenkins. He hoped that this could be published in Carolina Country.



"One of the reasons I'm doing so well is because of the support I have received from family, friends, consumers, and the employees of Union EMC."

Ray Jenkins, April 1999

A hero of the here and now

This is a cool, clear beautiful morning. Mist is hanging in the trees, the air is clear with a crispness promising cooler days to come. The animals are busy with a sense of urgency before the coming cold, wet days of winter when food will be scarce and life is again hard on them. Birds are flocking together for security against the coming winter.

I just now saw a small boy playing in his yard, skin smooth and fresh, eyes wide with excitement, anticipating all that is before him. He is in the beginning of life. Then I began to think about you and me. Our skin is wrinkled and scarred from many years of life, scarred by the everyday cuts and bruises from working, trying to provide for our families and they not knowing our aches and pains, only that we keep going. Our eyes are not so clear anymore. Time has blurred them. Our hands that once held our babies with a rock-like steadiness are not so steady anymore. Our step that once was quick and strong is not as quick anymore. The toll of many years is building up on us. Our body has aches and pains that we must keep to ourselves. We accept all of this as life.

As my thoughts began to wonder, a new realization came to me. Ray, you have meant so much to me in just a short time. Your strength in your battle, the way you always keep going. Many times I knew that you really felt bad, but you would always pick your head up say something funny and laugh. The character, courage and sheer determination that you have is something to behold. Anyone can be happy when all is perfect. You are always happy and helpful even in this battle. Heroes are usually from far away or from time past. You are a hero of the here and now.

We have seen many days and many things. We have loved, laughed and lived life to its fullest. We have loved our children and bragged on them, all in love and wonderment that God saw fit to bless us with them. We are so proud of our wives who chose us as life-long companions. They give us so much. They are gifts from a loving God who blessed us with so much.

What a wonderful life we have. Here in our twilight, you and me, we finally meet. My blessings from God keep coming. In just a short time you have taught me so much. You have shown courage when all was lost, compassion when a lesser man would have had none, cheerfulness when you had so much you could have been sad about. I have seen you lift your head and laugh, when I knew you were in pain. I have seen you doing when all of your strength was gone. You always encouraged others when you were not able to go on, the last to ever forsake anyone.

Today I realize how lucky I am that I had the opportunity to know you. From you I have learned to persevere in the face of defeat, to lend a hand to anyone in need, to give what is needed, and to keep silent about what is coming against me. Our paths have not been long joined. The experience has greatly enriched my life. A brother could not mean more to me. Under the power of God, we are brothers.

One day, when our Lord and Master greets you, the words that he will surely say are, "Welcome home, Ray, my good and faithful servant!"

God bless you, Ray.

*Your brother in Christ,
Mickey*



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N.C. Municipal Power Agency (MPA) Cities

These 51 comprise the membership of two agencies formed to purchase joint ownership in electric power generation plants. North Carolina Municipal Power Agency #1 is composed of 19 systems, and North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency is composed of 32 systems.

Albemarle	Lexington
Apex	Lincolnton
Ayden	Louisburg
Belhaven	Lumberton
Benson	Maiden
Bostic	Monroe
Cherryville	Morganton
Clayton	New Bern
Cornelius	Newton
Drexel	Pikeville
Edenton	Pineville
Elizabeth City	Red Springs
Farmville	Robersonville
Fremont	Rocky Mount
Gastonia	Scotland Neck
Granite Falls	Selma
Greenville	Shelby
Hamilton	Smithfield
Hertford	Southport
High Point	Statesville
Hobgood	Tarboro
Hookerton	Wake Forest
Huntersville	Washington
Kinston	Wilson
LaGrange	
Landis	
Laurinburg	

Commentary

A cooperative solution for a North Carolina problem

by Charles W. Terrill

If the North Carolina legislature decides to move forward with restructuring the electric utility industry and opening the electric service market to retail competition, one of the most complex issues we face is that of "stranded debt." No restructuring plan can proceed until we can solve the problem of paying for systems that were put into place while the market was regulated.



All electric utilities over the years made investments in facilities to ensure a reliable electric service for the future. The debt still owed on some of these assets will be "stranded" or left unrecoverable in an environment where service, rates and even the customer base itself are subject to competitive market forces.

In North Carolina, government, utilities and consumers are analyzing ways to address stranded debt, among other issues associated with a restructured utility industry. All utilities have stranded costs, but the utilities facing the greatest risk are those owned by 51 of the state's municipalities, whose combined stranded costs total about \$6 billion. The legislative Study Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina is looking hard at the issue.

Electric cooperatives have proposed a solution. Our plan places the consumers and communities of North Carolina above all interests. Throughout the discussion of a restructured

utility system in this state, we have stated our priority that all consumers – small and large, residential and business, rural and urban – receive a benefit. The proposal we placed before the Study Commission, we believe, is the only one that grants fair treatment across the board.

Simply put, the electric cooperatives are prepared to negotiate for the purchase of the generation and distribution assets of the 51 municipal electric systems that make up the two North Carolina Municipal Power Agencies (MPAs) and thereby open a way for paying down the debt on their assets. The 51 city-owned and operated systems comprise about 371,000 customers or nearly 5 percent of the state's total electricity customers.

Our proposal to address the situation involving these municipal systems shows clear advantages over an alternative plan proposed jointly by Duke Energy and Carolina Power & Light. Those advantages include:

- Lower electric rates for rural consumers and current customers of the municipal power systems.
- Continued local electric service.
- Continued local ownership of facilities.
- An avenue for paying off more of municipal power systems' debt.
- Less potential for an imbalance of market power.

We presented our proposal in mid-November, a few weeks after the joint proposal presented by CP&L and Duke, two investor-owned utilities serving North Carolina. Their plan is to auction, bid or otherwise dispose of the MPA-member cities' assets. This does not necessarily provide the highest value for the greatest number of North Carolinians. We favor a negotiated sale approach, which offers a North Carolina solution to the MPA debt problem.

Electric cooperatives serve consumers in 93 of the state's 100 counties and have offices in or near most of the 51 MPA cities. The cooperatives' network of 63 service facilities throughout the state represents yet another advantage to MPA customers accustomed to local, personal service. Cooperatives operate over 79,000 miles of distribution line in North Carolina, compared to CP&L's 41,000 and Duke's 51,000 miles.

As not-for-profit businesses owned by those we serve, electric cooperatives bring to

A Comparison of North Carolina's Electric Utilities

Electric Utilities	Total Number of Customers	Residential Consumer Percentage	Residential Sales Percentage	Miles of Distribution Lines	Percentage of NC Total Distribution Lines*
North Carolina's Electric cooperatives	755,189	94%	75%	79,985	42.4%
Carolina Power & Light	1,007,788	85%	34%	41,759	22.1%
Duke Energy	1,503,381	86%	32%	51,392	27.2%
MPA Cities	371,132	85%	35%	9,118	4.9%

* includes NC Power and other small utilities

the negotiation structural and operational advantages favoring North Carolina electric service consumers as well as the state's taxpayers at large. The municipal utility customers would receive lower rates and efficiencies of scale. They also will continue to benefit from the cooperative history of local control that they are accustomed to and receive excellent distribution service from a nearby cooperative office or existing city office.

You as electric cooperative consumers, of course, would realize benefits, too. Combining the cooperatives' and municipalities' distribution facilities creates operational and economic efficiencies in that it captures the benefits of having city and cooperative distribution systems in geographic clusters and on a significantly larger scale of operation. Your rates would go down.

During the discussion of these issues in North Carolina and nationally, concerns have been raised about market power concentrations. Concentrating the electricity market into fewer operations certainly hampers reaching the objectives of a more competitive system. Our proposal provides a better balance of ownership by entities based right here in North Carolina.

As we have stated since this study began, the electric cooperatives are interested in all consumers, especially the residential, farm and small business customers who we have served for more than 60 years. This plan for addressing the stranded debt of our neighboring municipal electric systems is based on that premise. Cooperatives are well known and trusted for the service they provide. We are confident in our abilities to extend our service economically and reliably.

Charles W. Terrill is Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer of the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC), the power supply cooperative for the state's electric co-ops.

Seen this lately?

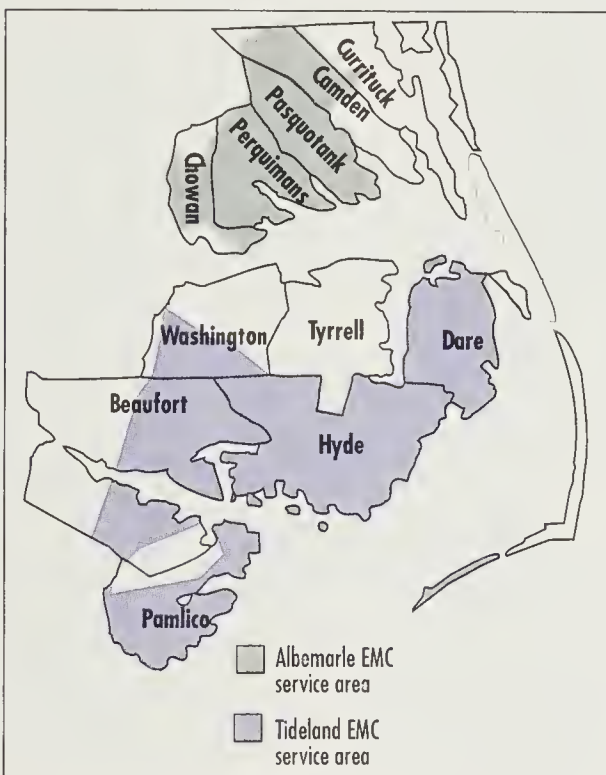
Haywood EMC member Tammy Cochran of Clyde sent us this picture of a hornet's nest attached to the bottom of a distribution transformer. She says it gives new meaning to the phrase, "buzz on the line."

If you see something like this in your area, don't try to remove it yourself. Call your electric cooperative and report the situation.



Two eastern N.C. co-ops agree to share services and consider merger

Two eastern North Carolina electric cooperatives — Tideland EMC and Albemarle EMC — have agreed to share specialized services offered by the other. Tideland EMC has about 20,500 members and Albemarle EMC has about 9,600 members.



The agreement comes in the wake of the announced departure of Tideland EMC's general manager Joe Slater. Slater, who served as the utility's general manager since August 1997, has accepted a position with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in Washington, D.C.

Albemarle EMC underwent a management change in June 1998 with the hiring of Jeff Edwards after the retirement of long-time general manager Dorris White. Edwards will serve as Tideland EMC's interim general manager while continuing his duties at Albemarle EMC.

The shared services agreement allows each EMC to apply more fully their own specialized services and staff in areas such as engineering, accounting and marketing.

Discussions between the two electric cooperatives indicate that a corporate merger holds potential benefits for the member-owners of each

utility. Such benefits may include short-term rate stabilization with the potential for long-term rate decreases, a broader base of retail services and improved disaster response. The Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) based in Herndon, Va., performed a preliminary analysis that projects \$11 million in savings over a 10-year period should the two utilities merge.

The EMCs have hired the NRECA National Consulting Group to study the merger process including extensive financial analysis, reorganization of existing staff and the coordination of technical issues. A final report to the combined boards of directors will be presented by NRECA in late January.

Tideland EMC officials have said that if either of the cooperatives' boards of directors should reject a merger proposal, Tideland will resume searching for a general manager.

Tideland EMC is itself the product of a merger and can trace its roots

back to what once were three individual cooperatives and one privately owned power company.

Tideland EMC serves more than 20,000 electric accounts in Hyde, Beaufort, Dare, Pamlico, Washington and Craven counties. The utility maintains full service offices in Engelhard, Pantego, Grantsboro and Ocracoke. Tideland EMC is also the parent company of Tideland Energy Resources which offers specialized retail services including commercial fleet vehicle maintenance and appliance sales and services.

Albemarle EMC serves over 9,600 electric accounts in Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties. The cooperative's headquarters is located in Hertford.

Both EMCs are members of the Touchstone Energy national network of electric cooperatives.

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"Where is the finest place to live in North Carolina?" we asked. Well, it looks like it's home, of course.

I suppose we haven't heard from the people who would rather live some place other than home, or from people who don't have a place to live, for one reason or another. We did hear from people who have moved away from their North Carolina home place and wish they were back. Another man said he preferred North Carolina as a place to live before people began moving in from out of state.

But by far, those of you who wrote in last year about this topic like where you live now. It does not surprise us that what makes home a good place to live are natural surroundings, good schools and churches, people who know and help one another, proximity to inspiring scenery, safety, and for many of you, your reliable electric cooperative.

Here is a selection from the group that we didn't have space for the last time we considered "the finest place to live in North Carolina."

Next month we will run your accounts of "How We Met." Deadline was Dec. 23. For the other themes of 2000, see page 19.

—Michael Gery

Rural Granville County

I was born in Granville County and grew up on a tobacco farm. Our family took great pride in raising the best flue-cured tobacco possible. Rural life gave me many opportunities that were not possible in a city. I enjoyed being outdoors and the freedom to roam the farm. Fishing, horseback riding, making mud pies and playing in the creek were a few of the things that rural life offered me. It brought me close to nature and gave me a realization of the Creator that I may not have found in a metropolitan area.

The fact that I found much contentment on a farm in Granville County does not mean that everyone would find the same satisfaction living in a rural section. The old saying that "there is no place like home" is very true. Home is where the heart is, and each individual knows what place would best suit him or her. The great state of North Carolina can offer a person any terrain he or she desires. It is with much pride and affection that I call a small rural portion of North Carolina home.

Carolyn P. Pittard

Oxford

Piedmont EMC member



Bethany, Cumberland County

I am fortunate to live in the Bethany community near Stedman in Cumberland County. This is home to the Bethany Volunteer Fire Department, a valuable asset to our area. Our firemen respond to fire and rescue calls, and they assist citizens in numerous other ways. The firemen and the Ladies Auxiliary are a committed team.

We're proud of the Bethany churches: Bethany Methodist, Bethany Church of God, Magnolia Baptist, Oak Grove Freewill Baptist. These congregations often come together in joint services, which are beneficial to the community. Fellowship, fun, and the ministries from such gatherings are uplifting.

We have tractor pulls right in the heart of Bethany sponsored by the Eastern Antique Tractor Pullers Association. Folks congregate to watch tractors of all shapes and sizes from North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Georgia, South Carolina and even Minnesota compete in 24 weight classes. Also, kids ages 3 to 7 compete on pedal tractors. This is clean, exciting family entertainment where you also can chow down on delicious food from the fire department's Ladies Auxiliary.

South River Electric's dedicated employees serve Bethany. Life is made easier and troubles lessened in Bethany by timely hard work of South River EMC employees.

Lyn C. Autry

Stedman

South River EMC member

Stanley

Even though we have no more than 3,000 folks in Stanley, you would think there were many more when a crisis hits. Since we are small, we can keep in touch with our neighbors. It's no problem to get 75 or 100 praying for you or your need in a matter of minutes. The phone rings, you listen, then spread the word. I know because I have been one who was remembered. The people of Stanley know how, and they put that know how into action to help ease your pain.

A lady commented to me one day, "I think you folks would pray for a sick cat." And I asked, "Do you have one?"

A town that prays together will see great things. We believe that all we have in this old world is each other, and we will only pass through here once.

Ailene L. Friday

Stanley

EnergyUnited member

High Rock, Boomer

High-Rock, Boomer in southern Wilkes County is a small community where every one knows each other and no one has to lock their doors at night.

It is a wonderful place where I grew up as a barefoot tomboy. I went everywhere with a .22 rifle and fishing pole. I played in the woods at the branch where I caught crawfish and spring lizards, watched the slow doodles of periwinkles and laughed at the crazy antics of waterbugs.

I've heard the whippoorwills calling in the soft summer nights and the hoot-owl's eerie cries in the crisp wintertime. I yearned to hear the red-winged blackbird bring in the spring.

I watched the stars shining in our North Carolina skies and saw rainbows, God's hands shining forth after a hard and glorious thunderstorm. Once I saw the Aurora Borealis on a sharp winter's night.

Many things in these old foothills have blessed me: the rich dark smell of newly turned soil being prepared for spring crops, the feel of that dirt between my toes while planting potatoes, the hush of falling snow when all is quiet and still, and then later the breathtaking glory of a full moon shining down upon it.

Gaynell Wolfe Eller

Boomer

EnergyUnited member



At home one night

Growing up in a poor family in a small town can give a young girl the desire for greener pastures. I could never really be satisfied, always telling myself that one day I would be able to leave this place and go where there were no troubles. Life was very simple, and longing for the better was only natural.

Well, my ship never did come in, and I never did sail away to the destinations I had pictured in my mind. But sitting out on the porch of my run-down North Carolina home one night, I closed my eyes tight and thought back to when I was a child: the excitement I felt on Christmas morning, my very first puppy, how ice cream was a luxury in our home, the way my mother would help me with my prayers at night. I realized right then that I was living in the finest place, not just in North Carolina, but the whole world. I felt that finally I was satisfied.

Judy J. Sigmon

Concord

Pilot Mountain

Pilot Mountain, with its rural surrounding and access to major cities such as Winston-Salem, Mount-Airy and the state of Virginia, allows you to live in a quiet hometown atmosphere.

From the streets of downtown Pilot Mountain to the top of the Knob, one can imagine the tobacco fields and barns that once dotted the countryside, giving it the old, quiet, rustic setting where our grandparents worked the land. Generation after generation handed down the traditional values that make Pilot Mountain what it is today: a place where you can raise and educate your children in a safe and healthy environment, where our future leaders can pass on the traditional values wherever they may go.

Todd Inman

Pilot Mountain

Surry-Yadkin EMC member



Anywhere in North Carolina

I've played up and down North Carolina's salty beaches and the Blue Ridge trails. I've frolicked through ice-cold creeks and squished my toes in newly plowed fields. I've gazed for hours at Carolina blue skies, trying to fathom the depth of God's creation on permanent display here, and wondered exactly where I fit in. My eyes have burned with the mustiness of old leather and chinked wood in log cabins once inhabited by Carolina pioneers. My ears have pounded with the haunting drumbeat of Cherokees who still trudge on the trail of their tears. I've stopped at gas stations for hoop cheese and bologna sandwiches. I've shopped local trading posts for chocolate drips and rock candy. I've loved knowing what grits, taters, maters and onyuns are, and that my family's garden could provide if grocery stores ever close. I've jumped waves at Carolina Beach, mud holes on Granny's tobacco farm and off cliff faces at Linville Gorge.

Yes, in North Carolina I have lived. The finest place? Everywhere that family vacations, class trips or steps out my back door have taken me. I've been nowhere in this state about which I could complain. I doubt I ever will.

Cindy Kerr

Mocksville

EnergyUnited member

Mt. Olive

I have been fortunate enough to travel to many regions of our beautiful state, including big cities boasting every urban amenity, but I would not trade one nicety these places have to offer for the blessings I have received from living in a small town — Mt. Olive.

You might ask, "What is so special about this place?" Many things come to mind. Knowing not only your next-door neighbor, but everyone who lives down the street. Going to the grocery store where they still deliver your purchases. Driving down the road and seeing the people you meet wave. Not needing your receipt to return something to the store. Borrowing a cup of sugar from someone next door.

These are simple things, but the benefits of knowing and helping your neighbors offers something that far outweighs the benefits of many modern conveniences you may find elsewhere. Mt. Olive is a town where time after time I have seen people making sacrifices for others. This is what makes Mt. Olive truly one of the finest places to live in North Carolina.

Jennifer Lewis

Dudley

Tri-County EMC member



Clay County

Watching autumn unfold in the mountains of Clay County is, to quote a friend, "like standing on the threshold of Heaven." There's more beauty than you can take in.

As autumn turns to winter, Lake Chatuge loses its sky-blue color and turns an icy green. The mountains are at their most magnificent without their foliage. The folds and angles are clear-cut, and their color makes me understand the song about "purple mountains' majesty." Days with white snow on the tips are even better!

Spring brings the rhododendron, mountain laurel and new life everywhere, followed by summer's green lushness with pristine, rushing streams full of trout.

My husband and I never tire of the beauty of this area, but the true beauty is in its people. We came from a metropolitan area to the rural area of Shooting Creek, where neighbors are still neighborly. They share recipes, seeds, planting advice, rototillers, firewood, apples, and much more.

People in the town of Hayesville, 10 miles from our door, are always friendly and helpful. It's a real community where people care about each other, laugh with each other, and mourn with each other. We wouldn't trade Clay County for anywhere else.

Anne Waldschmidt

Hayesville

Blue Ridge Mountain EMC member

McElroy Cove, Haywood County

I live on a one-mile gravel road located in Haywood County. The road is named McElroy Cove Road after my family who settled here around 1850. When my son built a house on the farm, he became the sixth generation of McElroys to live here.

The neighbors are kind, loving and caring about the well-being of their friends. They lend a helping hand in any time of need and are always there to comfort others during difficult times. Sharing the bounty of

the gardens is a wonderful time in the summer.

Cattle and horses graze on hills, a neighbor raises chickens. Tobacco, corn and hay are harvested. The lazy-hazy days of summer are wonderful in this valley. At nights the frogs croaking by the streams and pond are sweet music to my ear.

This cove is the nearest place to Heaven on this earth.

Jane McElroy Sims
Waynesville
Haywood EMC member



Coleridge, Randolph County

Once a thriving mill town on the banks of Deep River, with a school, churches, post office, company store, power plant and a bank that did not close during the Depression, the rural Randolph County community of Coleridge is now composed of homes and farms that extend beyond the boundaries of the original town.

Here live people who have always believed it takes a village to raise a child and have practiced it for generations, encouraging its young people to become their best, whether playing baseball or piano, becoming a carpenter, teacher or engineer.

Here people still come to the aid of their neighbors. While my dad was temporarily blind, the neighbors showed up one morning to cut and split his wood. My mother broke her ankle in the middle of canning season, and early one summer morning, the neighbor women gathered at the bean patch, pails in hand. By noon, beans had been picked, strung, washed and packed in jars. Each lady took a canner home and brought the processed beans back ready for storage.

Here people pull together in times of joy, sadness and despair. There are many places in North Carolina that may be more picturesque, more charming and more exciting, but none can be a finer place to live.

Nancy Cox Frye
Carthage
Randolph EMC member

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March

"The Finest Advice for Newcomers to North Carolina"

Helpful and hospitable.

Deadline: Jan. 15

August

"Why I Like My School"

Submissions from students age 18 and under only

Deadline: June 15

April

"The Funniest Story I Ever Heard"

Tall, short, true or otherwise.

Deadline: Feb. 15

September

"The Finest Photo in North Carolina"

Our annual exhibition of your photos.

Deadline: July 15

May

"The Finest Place To Grow Up In North Carolina"

Where and why.

Deadline: March 15

October

"My Best Fish Story"

Even if it got away.

Deadline: Aug. 15

June

"The kindest thing anyone ever did"

To you or anyone else.

Deadline: April 15

November

"The Finest Family Recipe"

Your best recipe and the story behind it.

Deadline: Sept. 15

July

"The Worst Storm I've Ever Seen"

What happened?

Deadline: May 15

December

"Our Finest Family Tradition"

Passed down through the years.

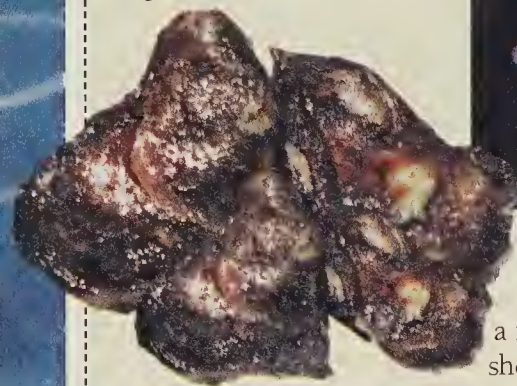
Deadline: Oct. 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. E-mail or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
5. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (*We will not return others.*)
6. We pay \$50 for each submission published.
7. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions.
8. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com. Or through the Web site: www.carolina.country.com

How spat attach to cultch in upwellers – and other wonders of oyster farming

Shellfish farmers
Jim and Bonnie
Swartzenberg have
been raising oysters
on their lease near
Topsail Island for
five years. Their
electric utility is
Jones-Onslow EMC.



Jim and Bonnie Swartzenberg live a few miles from the Stump Sound shore, near the Onslow County farm where Bonnie was raised. She remembers culling the bushels of oysters her parents harvested from the sound during the fall and winter, after they'd brought in the corn and soybeans. A few years ago, the Swartzenbergs quit their city jobs (Bonnie as a social worker and Jim as a teacher) and went back to the farm, but not to grow crops on land. They've spent the past five years farming oysters just offshore.

Stump Sound, on the back side of Topsail Island, is one of 100 inlets carved into the North Carolina coast. These shallow, protected areas are perfect for growing oysters.

Farming the Sea

Oyster farming can help reverse the trend of declining harvests among North Carolina's wild oysters. While harvests of a million bushels of oysters a year was not uncommon in North Carolina around the turn of the century, an average year in the 1990s yielded a mere 55,000 bushels. Overharvesting, the silty runoff and deteriorating water quality caused by coastal developments, and the spread of parasitic oyster dis-

eases are the most often cited reasons for the decline. Oyster farmers, by contrast, can protect the oysters from the time they are free-swimming larvae, barely discernible to the naked eye, until two years later, when the 3- to 5- inch oysters are ready for harvest.

The culture of oysters begins in an onshore nursery system. The Swartzenbergs' system consists of three 15-by-3-foot waist-high plywood trays filled with about a foot of seawater. The trays hold a double row of "upwellers" which are PVC cylinders, 12 inches in diameter, open to the sky on one end and enclosed on the other end by a mesh a few inches from the bottom. In early summer, Jim and Bonnie buy oyster larvae (this year they were air-shipped from a hatchery in Louisiana), and stock them into the upwellers. Seawater pumped through the nursery contains millions of microscopic plants and animals which oysters filter from the water for food. An adult oyster can filter as much as 8 gallons of water a day.

After two or three days, the swimming oyster larvae settle to the bottom, eager to attach to something. To do that, suitable cultch material — preferably oyster shell or something similar — must be available. The oyster "spat," as they are now

Text and photos by Rebecca Dunning

called, attach to the cultch material to begin the fixed part of their life cycle. The availability of cultch, is vitally important; none of the 50 to 100 million oyster larvae spawned from an adult oyster will survive if suitable cultch is not available.

The Swartzenbergs supply the spat with cultch, and keep them onshore an additional six weeks. Then the inch-long oysters are stocked into flat, rectangular cages of rigid mesh and secured to PVC racks built off the sea floor on the Swartzenbergs' 37-acre shellfish lease. The oysters will be transferred into bags of larger mesh size two more times over the next 18 months. "The key is to keep them moving," says Jim. "You can't just put them in a bag and leave them." Each time that the oysters are moved, fewer are stocked per bag. This prevents crowding, which reduces their ability to filter food from the water. The bags also protect the oysters from predators such as blue crabs. And since the bags are suspended off the bottom, there is far less chance that oysters would suffocate either from being buried in shifting sand, or from a lack of oxygen.

This tender care vastly increases the chance that oysters will survive, and speeds their growth. "Our oysters grow to market size twice as fast as those in the wild," says Jim. Not only is that good for the Swartzenbergs' cashflow, but faster growth makes it much less likely that the oysters will succumb to a common parasitic oyster disease, "Dermo," which typically strikes an oyster in its third year of life. By that time, Jim and Bonnie's oysters have already been harvested.

Oysters in the Wild

Most oysters harvested in North Carolina don't benefit from lifelong protection like that on a farm, but many get a hand from the state and shellfish leaseholders. To increase the chances that oyster larvae will attach to cultch and prosper, the state of North Carolina maintains public oyster reefs. In the 1990s, the Division of Marine Fisheries, part of the state Department of Health and Natural Resources, planted an average of 400,000 bushels of cultch per year. Oysters affix to the planted cultch and grow large enough to reproduce, as well as to be available for harvest.

Many of the shellfish leaseholders also put down cultch in expectation that oyster larvae will settle there and grow. The Swartzenbergs planted 800 bushels of shell on their 37-acre lease in 1999. Depending on the area of the coast, from 25 to 65 percent of the oysters harvested originate from cultch beds planted by the state or individuals.

Oyster farmers who grow for commercial sale, and "gardeners" who grow for their own table, help not only themselves, but the entire estuary. Oysters stabilize the sediments in the estuary, take excess nitrogen and phosphorus out of the water, and attract other filter feeders. They help create an ecological balance that enhances the whole fishery habitat. As Mike Marshall, of the Division of Marine Fisheries, says, "Oysters are unique in that they provide a beneficial habitat as well as a fisheries product."

Rebecca Dunning is an aquaculture specialist with the N.C. Department of Agriculture. She has also reported in Carolina Country on both crawfish and striped bass farming in eastern North Carolina.

Getting to the bottom line of oyster farming

The state leases some 1,200 acres of coastal seabottom to about 250 individual leaseholders. At present, only about 60 of the leaseholders grow oysters commercially. The remainder grow shellfish for their own use or simply maintain the leases.

People looking to get into oyster farming generally seek to assume an existing lease rather than open a new one through the state. The cost of obtaining a lease varies greatly depending on location, productivity, and the value of shellfish on the lease at the time of sale. Beyond the lease itself, most of the start-up cost goes into pumps, racks and other equipment. Jim Swartzenberg estimates about \$5,000 for pumps, cages, upwellers and the like. This does not include a boat to get to the lease.

The market price for farm-grown cultured oysters this winter is about \$42 per bushel, about 32 percent higher than bottom-cultured oysters.

For more information on shellfish farming and fish farming in North Carolina, attend the 12th annual North Carolina Aquaculture Development Conference, January 14-15 at the Sheraton in New Bern. For information, see the Web site at www.agr.state.nc.us/aquacult/adcc, or call Mercer Kivett, N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, (919) 733-7125.

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Steamed Oysters

You can buy fresh oysters anytime of the year, but conventional wisdom advocates eating them only in months containing the letter "R": September through April. This is when they are at their plumpest.

Place oysters in a shallow pan in the oven at 400 degrees or in a steamer and cook until the shells are slightly opened, about 20 minutes. In the meantime, prepare the sauce for dipping. Combine the following:

- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon horseradish
- 1 teaspoon vinegar
- A dash of hot sauce
- 1 cup ketchup
- Salt and pepper to taste

You may never have leftover steamed oysters, but if you do, lightly salt them and bread with cornmeal, then deep fry to eat on their own or on French bread as an oyster Poboy.

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Light snow and darkening skies bring out the best of these barns in the Stokes County foothills.

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We picked and sang our way

Western North Carolina's Farm Hour musicians were pioneers of country and bluegrass

By Al Wall



Here are the Rambling Mountaineers in 1943 during their prime with the Farm Hour radio broadcast from WWNC-Asheville. They, too, were among the bands who paved the way for today's bluegrass and country music popularity. They are (clockwise, from top) Ray Atkins, Red Rector, Carl Story and Claude Boone. Carl Story was well known then. A year before this picture was made, he was in Black Mountain and asked me and my mandolin-playing buddy to sing on the Farm Hour. It was quite an experience for a couple of teenagers from McDowell County.

When you get right down to it, the rural electric cooperatives played a major part in shaping country music as we know it today. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the electric cooperatives who provided service to country areas throughout America, because they brought the joy of radio into our homes. When electricity finally came to us in McDowell County, I became a regular listener, even more so when a neighbor taught me a few chords on the guitar.

At age 14, I began to understand the bond between radio, electricity and the music we were making in the mountains. Radio enhanced the marriage that emerged between entertainers and their audiences on what was once called the "kerosene circuit," a term designating buildings or concert halls where lighting was provided by oil lamps. Progress be praised!

I consider myself "country." Well, maybe more realistically "hillbilly," because I played the circuit before the more commercial "country-and-western" term was applied to the sound we turned out. (I must confess that during a 1970s interview with Paul Aaron on National Public Radio, a thought came to me and I coined a new term, "America's blue collar soul music," a designation that could fit as well as any other.)

Today, I answer to "old-timer" when addressed at shows, festivals, churches and fair engagements. I count as some of my best friends the musical artists who were regulars on the old Farm Hour that some of you may remember was broadcast on WWNC radio Asheville. I feel fortunate that some of my idols from that show actually became my colleagues.

Tar Heel boys get on the radio

In November 1935, the Crazy Water Crystal Company sent Homer "Pappy" Sherrill and brothers Bill and Earl Bolick, all of them Catawba County natives, from Charlotte where they were working, to the western North Carolina Farm Hour at WWNC where they stayed until July 1937. Their radio stage name was changed from Crazy Hickory Nuts to Blue Sky Boys. The Bolicks retained that label throughout their career in show business.

Next, Waynesville's Roy Hall and his band left Spartanburg to test the airways at the WWNC Farm Hour, a brief stop-over that would take the Blue Ridge Entertainers to Greensboro and then to a permanent base at Roanoke, Va. Side musician and brother Jay Hugh Hall would eventually return to Asheville in 1942 with his own band without the service of his long-time sidekick, Cherokee-born Clude Moody, who moved on to the Grand Ole Opry with Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys.

When Cliff and Bill Carlisle became disenchanted with their situation at WNOX-Knoxville, they moved across the Smokies to WWNC. They brought with them Shannon Grayson of Sunshine, whose mandolin and banjo

complemented the plaintive sounds of the Carlises' Dobro and flattop guitar. Grayson later became a mainstay with the Briarhoppers at WBT-Charlotte while the Carlises went on to record the post-World War II hit "Rainbow at Midnight."

The swinging doors saga continued at the WWNC Farm Hour. Old Fort natives Wiley and Zeke Morris introduced a youthful Don Reno to radio and later repeated the show business "first" with Tar Heel banjoist Earl Scruggs at Spartanburg. Listen closely and you'll hear the word "bluegrass" emerging; the Morris Brothers created two big hits in 1946, "Salty Dog Blues" and "Tragic Romance," both standards on the current bluegrass circuit. The names Reno and Scruggs will be inscribed forever in the hearts and minds of bluegrass fans throughout the world.

Weaverville-born Wade Mainer brought his all-Tar Heel band – Jay Hugh Hall, Howard Dixon and Steve Ledgord – to the WWNC Farm Hour shortly after he and Zeke Morris recorded "Maple on the Hill," a number still regarded as a bluegrass duet trend-setter.

Carl Story of Lenoir, honored as the "Father of Bluegrass Gospel," and his Rambling Mountaineers were replacements for Jay Hugh Hall's band at the Farm Hour. Carl Story is composer of "Working on a Building" and "I Overlooked an Orchid" made popular by yet another Farm Hour alumnus Carl Smith.

They let me in, too

It was during the Story era that the WWNC Farm Hour truly became an individual passion, a teenage crush on the medium of radio. Once when he came to Black Mountain, Carl Story gathered my little group backstage and extended an invitation for a guest appearance on the Farm Hour. On Christmas Day 1942, at 6 in the morning, mandolin player Charlie Lindsey and I boarded a bus at Marion bound for Asheville to keep an appointment with Story. Out there on that Christmas Day broadcast, Charlie and I sang the plaintive "In The Pines" with all of the gusto two high school seniors could muster, another experience for the memory log book.

It was only during the previous year, 1941, that I had my initial experience on radio. It came at the "Saturday Night Round-Up" on WWNC Asheville when the McCormicks, Cliff and Don, asked me to play back-up bass on a show originating from the David Millard Junior High auditorium. This single event would forever change my life, offering new career and past-time opportunities in ways only a mountain teenager could comprehend.

Now what I'm about to tell you may sound too poetic to be true, but this is the way it happened. Winding up my days in the US Navy, I arrived at San Francisco from Tsingtao, China, and received a telegram from my picking buddy, Clifford Johnson of Old Fort. He urged me to hurry home where a job awaited on the Farm Hour. Cliff was a mem-



This is a 1997 photo of Pappy Sherrill (on the left) and me. We still appear with our bands on the country and bluegrass tour. We already have a date to play together at two shows at the University of South Carolina in Columbia next October, and probably will have another couple dozen dates between now and then. I play guitar and Pappy is one of the best pedal players ever.

ber of the Blue Ridge Hillbillies, a unit that included mandolin whiz Red Rector of Marshall. So I turned down a slot to play my bass with with Dude Martin and his Round-Up Gang at Oakland, Cal.

When I arrived East, Cliff was headed West – he had signed with Tex Hall and his Hollywood Cowboys for a series of movie shorts to be filmed in California. There's more. Sunny Lou Parrott had taken the job as bass player with the Blue Ridge Hillbillies. But three weeks later Sunny decided to try her hand at early morning milking and Saturday night picking at Renfro Valley Barn Dance in Kentucky. The invitation for me to join the Farm Hour was re-extended, and I accepted.

We were full-time for the Farm Hour, but that didn't mean we could stop hustling for performance dates. One time, the band had accepted a theater date at Spruce Pine, a matinee and two evening shows, but there was a hitch. The matinee came only an hour-and-a-half after sign-off in the Farm Hour's Asheville radio studio, and Spruce Pine is 54 miles away. Time was pivotal, but ingenuity was never in short supply in show business.

Transportation for the Blue Ridge Hillbillies was a four-door, 1941 Olds, big enough for six entertainers, their musical instruments and a small sound system. My acoustic bass was strapped precariously on top for nightly trips around the Blue Ridge and Smokies.

That afternoon, following the short theme-repeat which introduced the Farm Hour's final segment, I slipped out of Studio A, placed the canvas covering on the bass fiddle and secured it atop the car out front of the Citizen-Times Building, home of WWNC. Next, Will Carver packed his steel guitar and amplifier and exited, followed by J.P. Sauceman. Only Carl Sauceman and Benny Sims, guitar and fiddle, were left at the microphone for the closing theme. Within two minutes after their final note, everyone was aboard for the trip. We made it with 15 minutes to spare. Just another day in the life of a

hillbilly band who knew that the only means to continued existence was a full slate of show dates – anywhere, anytime.

A link to the outside world

I soon learned by reading the daily mail – and it was considerable – that the Farm Hour for many people was a link to the outside world. It was a linchpin, a cohesive element that each day united listeners with one another, with the program people, and with the music itself. Its format offered live mountain music, along with farm and market bulletins and local and national news. It inspired creativity and originality in daytime programming, often coming across as controlled frenzy, with new ideas popping up on the air with modulated regularity.

Entertainers at WWNC – from legendary Jimmie Rodgers in 1927 to Carl Smith in 1950 – knew that the listening audience was their sole means of support. They also knew that despite an economy in deep hibernation during the 1930s, creativity and cooperation still thrived. What better example is there in our own history than when the electric cooperatives brought music to the North Carolina countryside, from Manteo to Murphy, through the magic of radio. As I work with youngsters coming up through the ranks today, I regret that they are denied the valuable experience of live radio and the accompanying responsibility of preparing a daily show eagerly awaited by tens of thousands of invisible, but extremely loyal fans.

The Farm Hour was for me an unforgettable journey. Its alumni are recognized as country and bluegrass pioneers, the forerunners who picked and sang their way through an unexplored territory without charts (and without caring where they stood on any chart) to open a road for the widespread popularity enjoyed by the stars of today's magical circuit.

Al Wall now lives at 1179 Montgomery Road Charleston, S.C. 29412 and continues to perform with his group Sugar Hill.

Horse country comes to Saxapahaw

Orange County developer "renovates" a historic dairy farm

By Renee Gannon

As kids, most of us grew up wishing for a horse in our backyard, and most of those wishes were left unfulfilled. Jordan Properties hopes to make that wish come true for at least 19 families willing to move to the country.

The Scotland Equestrian Estates is a 218-acre development in the southwest corner of Orange County near the Alamance County village of Saxapahaw (pronounced SAX-pa-haw). The development consists of 19 10-acre lots, each with access to large ponds and a planned bridal path. A maximum of four horses will be allowed on each lot. The centerpiece of the development will be a high-end equestrian center and country club. Homeowners will be able to keep horses on their land, at the equestrian center, or both.

The development is situated on a dairy farm once considered the most-modern, automated dairy farm in the state. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the P.W. Scott farm milked about 1,200 cows a day. Scott ceased dairy production in mid-1970s, but continued to farm the rolling land until the mid-1990s.

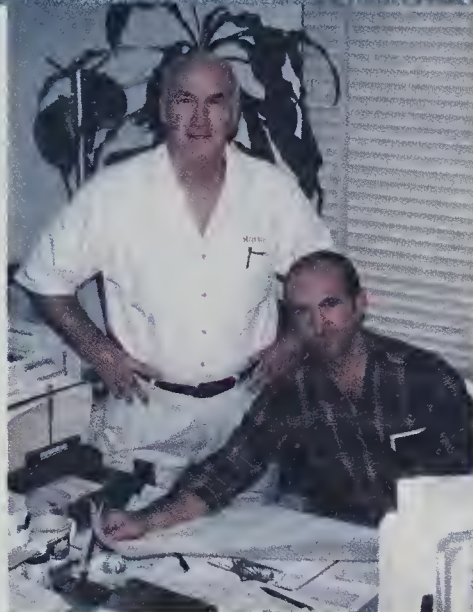
Jordan Properties purchased the farm and land in 1996. "We are developers. This is our twenty-second one since 1978. We always try to name each development after the local or previous owner, that's why this is called Scotland Estates," says John Jordan, chairman of Jordan Properties.

Top equestrian center planned

The most eye-catching feature of the farm is the dairy barn facility itself, consisting of a two-story building and two semi-enclosed stall buildings – 600 foot and 800 foot respectively. In its heyday, the barn was modern, clean and easy to look at. Today, with the last cow having stomped on its grounds more than 20 years ago, the barn is in disrepair. But Jordan sees potential in the old barn as an indoor-outdoor equestrian center, and the building as a country club and apartment for the eventual horse facility manager or owner.

"We are renovators, preservationists, not demolishers. We looked at the dairy barn as an asset, not a liability. You have to start with what you've got," he says. "The barn doesn't look like much now, but we believe when it's completed, the barn will be the finest private horse facility in the state, if not the East Coast."

Jordan and his son, Mac, are working with Joan McNair Petty and her husband Glenn. Joan is a real estate agent who often deals with farmland, and Glenn manages the Hunt Horse Arena at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh.



John Jordan and his son, Mac, are turning a dairy farm into "an equestrian community."

The Jordans are looking for someone to own the facility. "We will sell the barn as is, or sell it and renovate it to the buyer's specifications. If we don't have a buyer, we will renovate the barn under the direction of the Pettys, and there is no shortage of horse managers," says John Jordan.

The horse facility will be for the entire area, not just the 19 homeowners. The facility will need outside borders and horse shows to be profitable. Jordan estimates the barn renovation and cost of the land will run \$480,000.

"We are looking for someone to own this facility. We are not in the horse business, just developers who happen to be developing 218 acres of equestrian estates. You also don't have to own a horse to buy a lot," he says. "But this will be a horse community instead of a golf community."

A little bit country, a little bit urban

Work began on the development in September 1999. Barn renovations for the horse facility, living quarters and clubhouse is scheduled to begin early this year. The grand opening of Scotland Estates is scheduled for late April or early May 2000. Part of the horse barn, a show arena and rink will open with a horse show at that time.

Piedmont EMC of Hillsborough serves the area and has been a tremendous help to the Jordans in providing the high-end equestrian farm with underground utilities in the most cost-effective way.

Jordan says homeowners in the development will have the comfort of both the country and the closeness of the urban areas. Scotland Estates is located about six miles from I-85/I-40 and 13 miles from Chapel Hill off of Hwy. 54. Mebane, the closet town in Alamance County, is one of the fastest growing communities in the state.

And the nearby community of Saxapahaw, once a mill village but now a bedroom community to Chapel Hill/Carrboro, will give homeowners a slice of the old and new. Jordan Properties is in the process of renovating the old Saxapahaw Spinning Mill into apartments, art studios and small businesses. A charter school opened in the mill last year.

The Jordan family has been a major force in the Alamance-Orange County region for almost 75 years. John Jordan hopes this development carries on the tradition of revitalizing communities while preserving its rural characteristics.

For more information about Scotland Estates, contact Jordan Properties at (336) 376-3122 or Joan McNair Petty of York Properties at (919) 846-7100; or visit the Web page www.jordanproperties.com

If you can remember the aroma of
homemade bread fresh from the oven...
slathered with sweet homemade butter and jam
from berries you picked yourself...

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you have to move the hen to pick it up...

Or the first ripe strawberry or tomato or golden ear of corn from
your own garden...

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CAROLINA CLOSE-UP

Compiled by Renee Gannon



New children's books about a Watauga County quilt and a mouse

In "MeeMa's Memory Quilt," a young boy learns about the 150-year history of Watauga County from a quilt that has squares depicting its people and events. The book's illustrations were drawn by Watauga County schoolchildren. It is the first children's book by Jane Wilson and Michael Haas. The book covers the history of the

county and the surrounding mountain region and is suitable for the state's fourth grade curriculum. The 32-page hardcover book retails for \$16.95.

In "The Adventures of Francelia Whitefoot," Francelia the mouse must raise her 14 babies alone. When Francelia fails to return home one day, the animals in Sweetgrass Meadow come together to raise the children because it is the civilized thing to do. The book was written by John Higby and illustrated by Warren Dennis. The 80-page softcover book retails for \$14.

For more information about the books, call Parkway Publishers, Inc. at (800) 821-9155. To

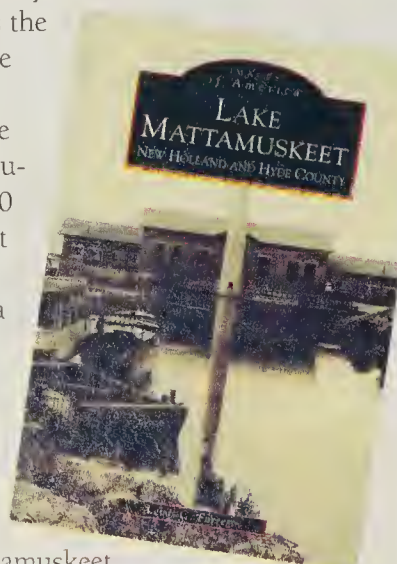
order by mail, add \$4 shipping and 6 percent sales tax, and send to Parkway Publishers, Inc., PO Box 3678, Boone, NC 28607.

Lake Mattamuskeet history book recalls massive drainage project

The most famous pump-supported land reclamation project in the United States occurred in Hyde County between 1909 and 1934. Known as the "New Holland project," three private companies and one public entity worked in partnership to drain Lake Mattamuskeet, the state's largest natural lake, three times – in 1916, 1920 and 1926. The last reclamation kept the lake dry for six years for farming. Since 1934, the lake has been a national wildlife refuge for fish, birds and game.

In the 128-page soft cover book, "Lake Mattamuskeet: New Holland and Hyde County," author Lewis C. Forrest Jr. (who also serves as president of The Mattamuskeet Foundation, Inc.) provides an account of the lake's story, including the 25-year history of the drainage project. The book is illustrated with 200 black and white photos.

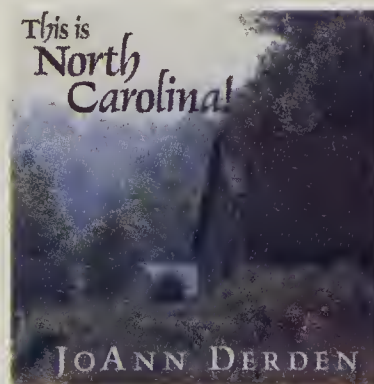
The book can be ordered by sending a check or money order for \$23.13 (includes shipping and taxes) to The Mattamuskeet Foundation, 4377 Lewis Lane Road, Ayden, NC 28513. For credit card orders, call (252) 746-4221.



Electronic music inspired by North Carolina's countryside

As soon as Joann Darden and her husband, Elton, moved to the mountains of North Carolina from Texas, it felt like home. To celebrate the beauty of her adopted state, Joanne Darden began recording music inspired by the state's scenery, especially the view from the Mountain View Lodge & Cabins that the couple own and operate in Glendale Springs. The music on the compact disc and two cassette tapes consist of improvisational "first impressions." She uses a Korg 01/W Pro X Music Workstation.

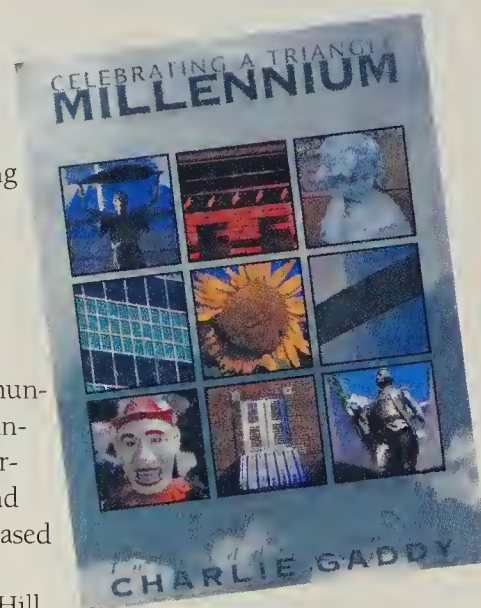
For information on how to purchase the cassettes or CD, contact the Dardens at (800) 903-6811 or (336) 982-2233.



Big picture book celebrates The Triangle

"Celebrating a Triangle Millenium" is a 400-page hardbound, coffee-table type book praising the diversity and business enterprise of North Carolina's Triangle area. Published by Towery Publishing of Memphis, Tenn., the book includes hundreds of photographs, an introduction by TV news personality Charles Gaddy, and profiles of 76 businesses based in the area that comprises Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, the Research Triangle Park and Cary.

It is available at bookstores for \$49.95 or from the publisher at Towery Publishing, 1835 Union Ave., Memphis, TN 38104. Phone: (901) 251-7000. Web site: www.introRaleigh.com



Cape Fear Museum showcases obsolete objects

To celebrate the new year, the Cape Fear Museum presents an exhibit of Obsolete Objects. The exhibit showcases curious and commonplace objects, ranging from the Dairy Queen Eskimo Girl sign to a fluoroscope X-ray machine once used by Su-Ann Shoes store clerks to determine correct shoe size.

Objects become obsolete as consumer demand changes and technology advances. Today, items such as VCRs and computers become obsolete almost overnight. The museum's 30,000-object collection includes glass milk bottles, a betty lamp, a bonnet hair dryer, a hat pin holder, glove stretcher, straight razor and leather strop, mimeograph machine, voting booth, hand-cranked centrifuge, icebox, 8-track tapes and tape deck, metal toys, clay marbles, an accordion-style petticoat hoop, spats, crosscut saw, bilge pump, cast-iron

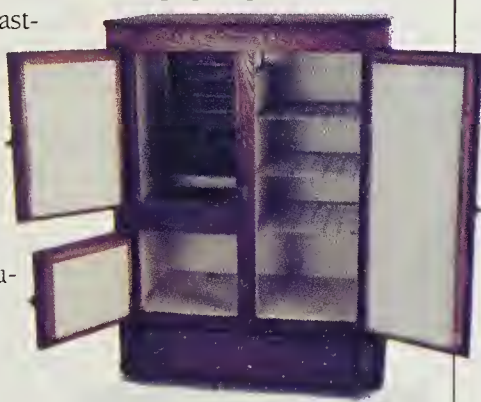


Toasters went from iron spikes for the fireplace to electric toasters.

hitching weight, toasters, typewriters and a plywood surfboard.

The Cape Fear Museum exhibit runs through Labor Day. The museum is located at 814 Market Street, Wilmington.

Admission is \$4 adults, \$3 college students with valid ID and senior citizens, \$1 children 5-17, free for children under 5 and museum members. For more information, call (910) 341-7413.



Iceboxes became obsolete when electricity led to refrigerator/freezers.

Window stickers for veterans

Men and women who served in the U.S. Armed Forces can display their military service involvement with Vetsignia Window Stickers. The stickers are 2-by-4 four inches, black on shiny silver metalized film, with an American flag background. Thirty-three different stickers are available for WWII, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia, Panama, Expeditionary, and Peacetime; and for the services of Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard and Merchant Marine.

The stickers are \$4 each or three for \$10 (shipping and handling included). Send requests to Bob Kline, Box 382, Blue Bell, PA 19422, or call (610) 277-1171. Be sure to include your branch of service and war served, expeditionary, or peacetime.

"The Defining Moment" from a Victorian perspective

"Home Again," by Henry Nelson O'Neill, is one of the 50 paintings on display at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte from January 15-April 2 in the exhibit, "Narrative Paintings from the Forbes Magazine Collection." Victorian era paintings portray the optimism and confidence Britons felt about themselves and their golden age. Themes relate to ideas about masculinity, imperialism, Victorian womanhood, childhood, death, poverty and loss. The Mint Museum of Art is located at 2730 Randolph Road, Charlotte. Admission is \$6 adults, \$4 students and seniors, museum members and children under 12 are free. For more information, call (704) 337-2000



Society of Historians is accepting nominations for awards through June

The N.C. Society of Historians is accepting nominations from individuals and organizations for its Y2K history, genealogy and preservation awards program. Awards will be presented in several categories relating to local, regional and statewide historical people, events or places. Categories include newspaper and magazine article, history book, family history book, society, publishers, newsletter (private and organization), journal, religious history book, historical fiction book and multi-media, as well as special awards, the President's award and two awards for Historian of the Year (eastern and western parts of the state).

Entry deadline is June 30, 2000. All entries must promote the preservation of some type of North Carolina history. Published materials must all between the dates of July 1, 1998 and June 30, 2000, with a July 31, 2000 deadline for entries dated June 2000. For more information or for award entry blanks, send a SASE to: Elizabeth Bray Sherrill, President, NCSH, PO Box 93, Sherrills Ford, NC 28673-0093. All entries must be accompanied by a completed entry blank. Request special forms for Historians of the Year, Multi-media and Society awards.

Morrisville company AuctionRover.com offers auction searches on the Internet

AuctionRover.com offers a one-stop resource for online auctions. The Morrisville-based company searches more than 30 online auction sites, ranging from eBay, Yahoo! and Amazon.com, to other general auction, specialty auction and collectors sites. The site allows buyers to search for items across auction sites, sellers to host images and counters, and provides content that will keep bidders and sellers informed and entertained. AuctionRover.com also offers tips on online bidding. Visit the Web site at www.auctionrover.com for more information.

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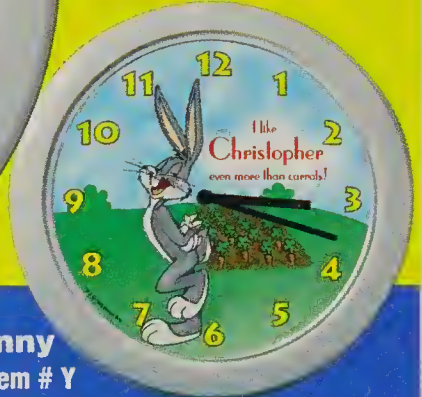


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Basketmaking
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Millenium Art Exhibit

Jan. 5-Feb. 18, West Jefferson
Ashe Arts Center gallery,
(336) 246-ARTS

NC Endangered Species

Jan. 6, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
Education, free,
(828) 877-4423

Coffee House Night

Jan. 15, West Jefferson
Mix of music, Jefferson United
Methodist Church,
(336) 246-ARTS

Mark Twain Reading

Jan. 20, West Jefferson
By Elliot Engel, Ashe Arts
Center, 7:30 p.m.,
(336) 246-ARTS

Skins and Skulls

Jan. 22, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
Education, 1-4 p.m., free,
(828) 877-4423

Project WILD Workshop

Jan. 24 & 25, Pisgah Forest
Pisgah Center for Wildlife
Education, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., free,
(828) 877-4423

War & Remembrance: A Love Story from the Civil War

Feb. 1-29, Smyrna, TN
Valentine's exhibit, Sam Davis
Memorial Home,
(888) 750-9524

Piedmont

Star of Bethlehem Show
Through Jan. 7, Chapel Hill
Morehead Planetarium,
(919) 962-1236

Festival of Lights

Through Jan. 9,
Winston-Salem
Tanglewood Park, 6-11 p.m.,
admission, (336) 778-6300,
www.tanglewoodpark.org

Dream Girls: Images of Women in Advertising

Through Jan. 15, Fayetteville
Art exhibit, Arts Center,
(910) 323-1776,
www.theartscouncil.com

Animation Cel Exhibit

Through Jan. 27, Carrboro
Animation Art, Animation &
Fine Arts Galleries,
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Presidential China

Through March 26,
Winston-Salem
Exhibit, Old Salem,
(336) 721-7329

African Art Exhibit

Through March 26,
Chapel Hill
Ackland Art Museum, UNC
campus, (919) 966-5736

Wood Art Exhibit

Through June, Charlotte
Mint Museum of Craft +
Design, (704) 337-2000

New Year's Eve Kid's Production

Jan. 1-2, Sanford
Play, Temple Theatre, \$5,
(919) 774-4155

Antique Gun and Military Show

Jan. 1-2, Raleigh
North Carolina State
Fairgrounds, \$5 adult, \$1 ages
7-12, (704) 282-1339

The Quantum Jazz Quartet Concert

Jan. 8, Winston-Salem
Reynolda House, 8 p.m.,
\$10 adults, \$5 students,
(336) 725-5325

Community Day Open House

Jan. 9, Winston-Salem
MESDA, Old Salem, 1:30-
5 p.m., free, (336) 721-7360

Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber

Jan. 13, Winston-Salem
Stevens Center, NC School
of the Arts, 8 p.m.,
(336) 721-1945

Riders in the Sky Concert

Jan. 14, Sanford
Singing cowboys, Temple
Theatre, 8 p.m., \$20,
(919) 774-4512

The Four Babes in Concert

Jan. 14, Winston-Salem
Stevens Center, NC School
of the Arts, 8 p.m.,
(336) 721-1945

Dolley Madison and the Uninvited Guests

Jan. 15, Winston-Salem
Puppet show for kids, Old
Salem Children's Museum,
(336) 721-7329

Victorian Narrative Paintings

Jan. 15-Apr. 2, Charlotte
Forbes Collection, Mint
Museum of Art, (704) 337-
2000, www.mintmuseum.org

Fair and Tender Ladies

Jan. 20-23, 27-30, Sanford
Play adaptation of Lee Smith
novel, Temple Theatre, \$15
adults, \$6 children,
(919) 774-4155

Piano Concert

Jan. 24, Winston-Salem
Pianist Taylor Carpenter,
8 p.m., \$10 adults, \$5
students, (336) 725-5325

Tony Orlando in Concert

Jan. 28, Fayetteville
Cumberland County Coliseum
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(910) 223-2900

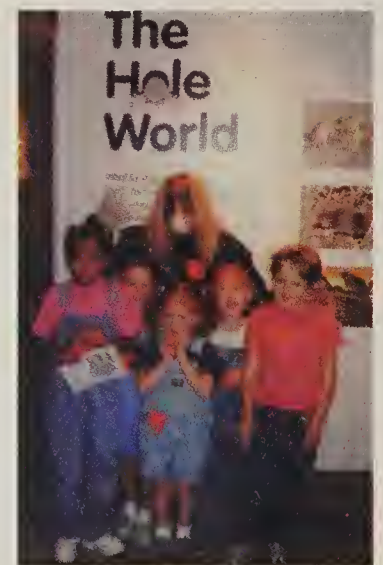
Southern Farm Show

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NC State Fairgrounds,
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Obsolete everyday items, Cape
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Underground animals exhibit,
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Fall of Fort Fisher Anniversary

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Bluegrass Blast

Jan. 15, Jacksonville
Southeast High School,
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Flute in the 20th Century
Jan. 21, Oriental
Pamlico Musical Society, St.
Thomas Episcopal Church,
7:30 p.m., free,
(252) 249-3079

Jonathan Bliss Concert
Jan. 22, Wilmington
UNCW Kenan Auditorium,
(800) 732-3643

Flute and Guitar Concert
Jan. 22, Oriental
St. Caecilia Duo, Pamlico
County Civic & Cultural
Center, 8 p.m., (252) 249-
3079

Model Railroad Show and Sale
Jan. 22-23, Wilmington
American Legion Post 10,
(910) 270-2696

Bride & Groom Expo
Jan. 23, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center,
(910) 763-6739

Emile Pandolf Concert
Jan. 23, Wilmington
Pianist, Thalian Hall,
Mainstage, (910) 343-3664

Sport
Jan. 28, Elizabeth City
Comedy about sports world,
COA Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.,
\$10 & \$14, (800) 335-9050

**NC Jr. Sorosis Antique
Show & Sale**
Jan. 28-30, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center,
(910) 763-6739

"Ancient Voices of Children"
Jan. 29, Wilmington
Music, Church of the Servant,
(910) 962-3500

Tibetan Monks
Jan. 29, Wilmington
Music, UNCW Kenan
Auditorium, (910) 341-4030

**George Gee and his Make-
Believe Orchestra**
Feb. 2, Wilmington
Swing Music, Thalian Hall,
Mainstage, (910) 343-3664

NC Jazz Festival
Feb. 4-5, Wilmington
Wilmington Hilton Riverside,
(910) 763-8585

Lawn & Garden Show
Feb. 5-6, Wilmington
Coast Line Convention Center,
(910) 763-6739

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DAY	DATE	EVENT	BUILDING	DAY	DATE	EVENT	BUILDING
Sat	1	Warren-Grannis Luncheon	AE	Sat	22	Boat & Fishing Show	AE
Sat	1	Hockey: Force vs. Huntsville	CL	Sat	22	Hockey: Force vs. Macon	CL
Fri	7	Harper & Morgan PBR Bull Riding	CL	Sat	22	Johnson Controls	HP
Sat	8	Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce Dinner	AE	Sat	22	All County Band Concert	AD
Sat	8	Harper & Morgan PBR Bull Riding	CL	Sun	23	Boat & Fishing Show	AE
Sat	8	Comedy Show	AD	Mon	24	U.S. Air Force Tops In Blue Concert	AD
Tues	11	NC Pork Council Convention	AE & HP	Sun	23	Carolina Hurricanes 2000 CHL/WCHL All Star Game Opening Ceremonies	CL
Wed	12	NC Pork Council Convention	AE & HP	Mon	24	Carolina Hurricanes 2000 CHL/WCHL All Star Game Skills Competition	CL/HP
Fri	14	Martin Luther King, Jr. Committee Dinner	HP	Tues	25	Carolina Hurricanes 2000 CHL/WCHL All Star Game	CL/HP
Fri	14	Monster Truck Show	CL	Fri	28	Tony Orlando - Community Concerts	AD
Sat	15	AAU Southern National Wrestling Tournament	AE	Fri	28	January Jam Gospel Concert	AR
Sat	15	Gospel Play	AD	Sat	29	Toy & Hobby Show	AE
Sat	15	Douglas Byrd Reunion Class of '84	HP	Sat	29	Hockey: Force vs. Memphis	CL
Sat	15	Monster Truck Show	CL				
Sun	16	AAU Southern National Wrestling Tournament	AE				
Mon	17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Prayer Breakfast	AE				
Wed	19	Patterson Dental Supply	HP				
Fri	21	Hockey: Force vs. Macon	CL				
Fri	21	Boat & Fishing Show	AE				

• CL-Crown Coliseum • AE-Agri-Expo Center
• HP-Hospitality/Ballroom • AD-Auditorium • AR-Arena
• PL-Parking Lot • TC-Total Complex

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TONY ORLANDO
January 28



All about e-mail

Personal Computing Advice
By Reid Goldsborough

Despite flashiness of the Web, e-mail is and has always been the Internet's killer application.

E-mail is the primary reason people go online, followed by research, according to a survey by Louis Harris & Associates. More than 1.6 billion noncommercial e-mail messages are sent each day in the U.S., which is nearly three times the number first-class postal mailings, according to an analysis by eMarketer, an Internet market research firm in New York City.

It's easy to see why. E-mail is cheaper and faster than a letter, less intrusive than a phone call, and more flexible than a fax. You can e-mail at work, school, and home, 24 hours a day, exchanging not only text but also photos, voice messages, and even video.

The first e-mail message was sent less than 30 years ago. Today, for many, e-mail has become an indispensable business and personal communications medium.

Chances are, though, that you're not using e-mail to its full potential.

These days you can go postal trying to keep up with all your incoming e-mail. Probably the most overlooked e-mail time-savers are filters and folders. With popular e-mail programs such as Microsoft Outlook

Express and Netscape Messenger, you can, for instance, automatically filter messages from your boss or important clients into a folder called Urgent. Whenever you fire up your e-mail program, go there first.

America Online lacks robust filtering, which is just one reason it can make sense to graduate to a full-fledged Internet service provider. There are also times when it makes sense to graduate from the free e-mail program that comes with your Web browser to a commercial, stand-alone e-mail client such as Eudora Pro (<http://www.eudora.com>).

Among Eudora Pro's useful features are its sophisticated filtering, its adeptness in managing multiple e-mail accounts, and its ability to quickly resend bounced messages.

Whatever e-mail program you prefer, you can use a free Web-based e-mail service such as Hotmail (<http://www.hotmail.com>) in conjunction with it when you travel or when in work situations you need to keep your personal e-mail separate from your business correspondence.

Services such as JFax (<http://www.jfax.com>) let you send and receive faxes and receive voicemail through your regular e-mail program. JFax also lets you listen to your incoming e-mail over the phone, which can be useful when you're away from a computer, though it's unwieldy in managing lots of messages. Receiving faxes and voice messages via e-mail is free; other services are charged.

If you regularly send one e-mail message to lots of people, say a newsletter to prospects or clients, check into a commercial bulk e-mail program such as MailKing (<http://www.mailking.com>). It works with your existing database and can be used to personalize the messages you send. But don't send unsolicited, untargeted bulk e-mail, called spam, or you'll just antagonize many of those you're trying to reach.

For sending and receiving e-mail among the same group of people, consider a Web-based mailing list serv-

ice such as ONElist (<http://www.onelist.com>). It's free, and it's easier to use in creating and managing e-mail-based discussions than older services such as Listserv.

E-mail may be fast, but it's not always reliable. Web-based services such as CertifiedMail.com (<http://certifiedmail.com>) guarantee delivery of e-mail, which is useful when sending important business documents. Pricing starts at \$10 per month for business use; personal use, with limited features, is free.

CertifiedMail.com also lets you encrypt your e-mail, to prevent others from reading it, and digitally sign it, to assure your recipient that it's from you and not forged. Optionally, you can do the same with your existing e-mail client using a program such as PGP Personal Privacy (<http://www.mcafee.com>).

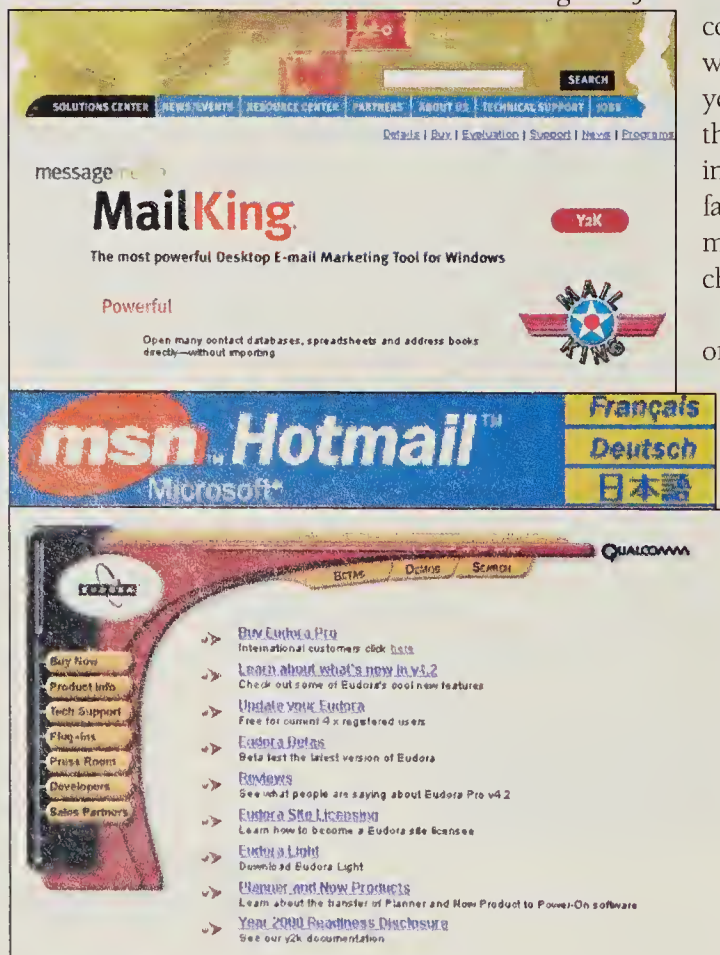
Though you can attach photos, music, and other files to your e-mail messages, many Internet service providers limit the size of these attachments to three megabytes or less. WhaleMail (<http://www.whalemail.com>) is a new, free service that lets you use your Web browser to send attachments as large as 50 megabytes.

If you haven't caught the Internet greeting card bug yet, you're missing out on a money-saver. Web-based services such as Egreetings (<http://www.egreetings.com>) let you send wired associates, friends and relatives personalized cards for birthdays, anniversaries and other occasions, for free.

Finally, here are five quick tips for e-mailing in general: Use descriptive subject lines. Keep messages, including quoted material, short. Send messages as unformatted text without attachments whenever possible. Copy only necessary people when responding to a group message. Double-check who will receive your message before sending it.

Want to learn more about e-mail? Check out Everything E-Mail (<http://www.everythingemail.net>).

Reid Goldsborough is a syndicated columnist and author of the book "Straight Talk About the Information Superhighway." He can be reached at reidgold@netaxs.com or members.home.net/reidgold.



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Match the blocks above with the blocks below to complete this quotation.

“

u	m	e
---	---	---

l	r	a	n
---	---	---	---

 is the

b	r	s	c	l
---	---	---	---	---

l	r	a	n
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 to do

b	r	s	c	l
---	---	---	---	---

 ”

Martin Luther King

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Use the Domi-No.s above in the multiplication problems below. When you find, by trial and error, the one-digit multipliers, you will find the name of a North Carolina county in each answer.

--	--

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A	G	A	R	E	M

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H	T	T	R	M

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Answers on page 43



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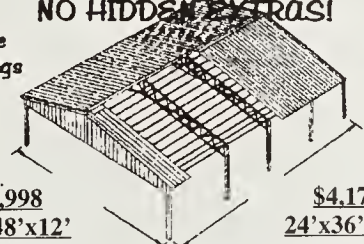
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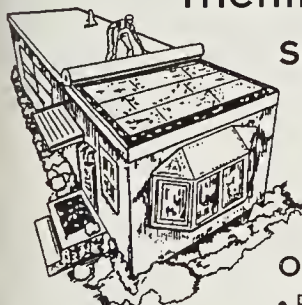
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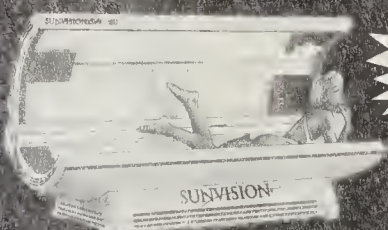
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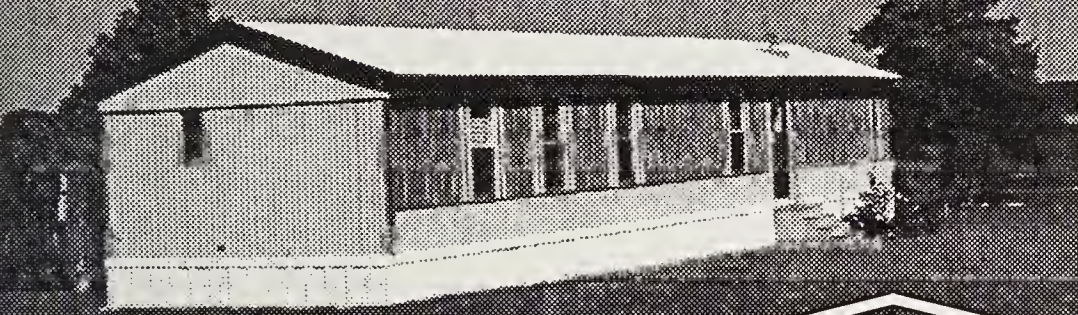
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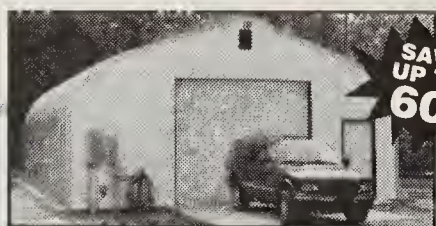
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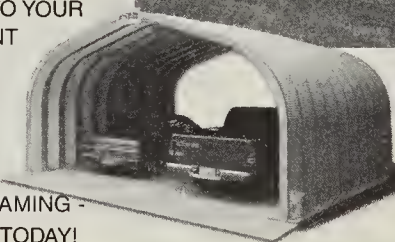
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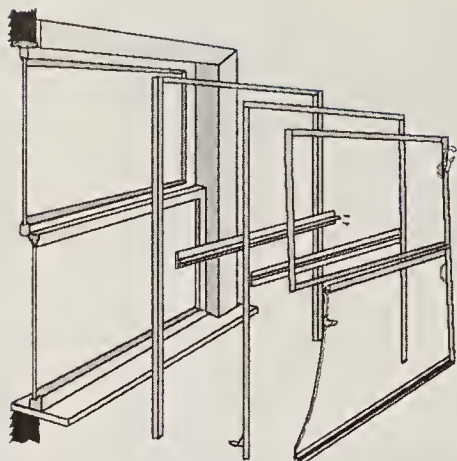
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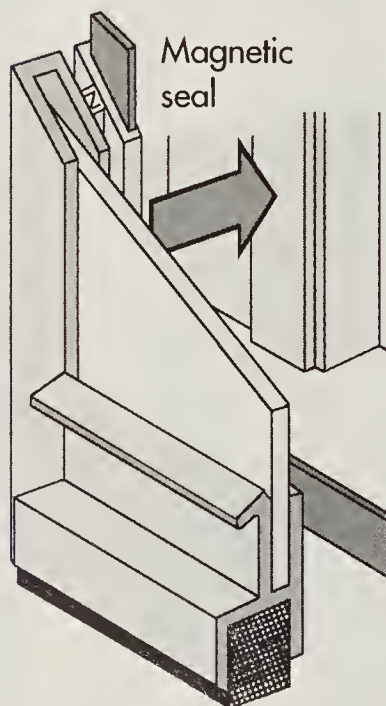
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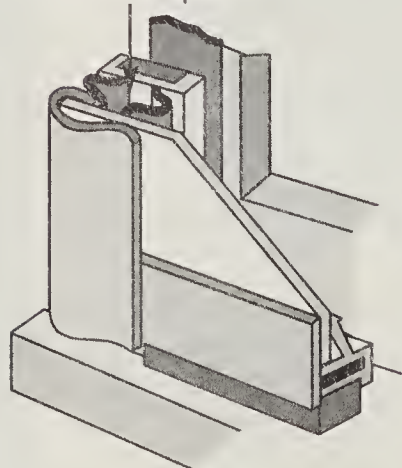
Interior storm windows can cut heating and cooling costs



Kit with two panels and extra center support for double-hung or slider windows



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Reusable, rigid interior storm window kits are an excellent low-cost, energy-efficient alternative to replacement windows if your present windows are still in reasonably good condition. Many are designed for simple do-it-yourself installation, and others can be dealer-installed. With proper care, these storm windows will still look like new after 10 years or more.

In addition to windows, do not forget any skylights that you have. Skylights, particularly older ones, can lose a substantial amount of heat and cause fading of furniture and carpeting.

Unless you use natural ventilation in the summer, leave the interior storm window kits up year-round for the most savings, outdoor noise reduction and comfort. With the narrow plastic frames, the storm windows are barely noticeable. The frames are available in several colors or you can paint them to match your walls. If you have natural wood window frames, select a kit with wood-grained frames.

Most storm window kits use lightweight clear acrylic because it insulates better than glass and it is safe and easy to work with. For the lowest cost, you can often mail order the frame kit for your window or skylight and then buy standard acrylic sheet at any local home center store.

Acrylic is a crystal clear plastic and does yellow over time like other plastics. It is very impact resistant (safe around children) and naturally blocks nearly all the sun's fading ultraviolet (UV) rays. For the greatest strength, choose polycarbonate ("bulletproof glass") plastic. It is more expensive and will yellow slightly over time.

If you have a window condensation problem in the winter, interior storm window kits can help. You must first paint the inside surfaces of the window opening with a sealer type of paint and then paint it with your regular wall paint if you like. This blocks indoor moisture from passing through the drywall and getting between the storm and primary window.

There are many designs of interior storm windows. Ones that use quick-to-install magnetic seals are most common. To make them less noticeable, they can be mounted directly against the primary window frame (creates a small dead air space) or inside the window opening on an L-channel. In either case, they are hidden and protected from playing children and objects.

Another option is to mount them over the entire window opening, overlapping on to the wall by an inch or so. This is the easiest installa-

tion method, but the deep air space between the storm and the primary window will allow wasteful air currents to develop between them.

A magnetic strip, usually about one-half inch wide, is embedded in the rigid vinyl storm window frame. A thin, self-adhesive steel strip is attached with adhesive to the wall or window frame. The powerful magnet holds the storm window snugly against the strip for an airtight seal.

If your old window frames are warped or wavy, choose a design that uses flexible bellows between the window frame and the magnetic strip (South Sun Energy Conservation "Winsulator"). This functions just like your flexible refrigerator door magnetic seal. It also helps to absorb impacts from your children.

Other attachment options are clips and hook-and-loop strips. Clips are often used on very large storm windows. Hook-and-loop strips hold very tightly and are easy to install and remove each year. Pipe Perfect Windows uses a simple design with foam tubing to form a snug, easy-to-install fit.

For very drafty old windows, select a kit with a secondary seal in addition to the primary attachment seal. If you have slider or double-hung windows, select a split kit (Magnetite "EZ Divider") that allows half of the window to be opened.

There are several kit purchasing options. The lowest-cost option is to buy a do-it-yourself frame-only kit. You cut the vinyl frame sections yourself and purchase the clear acrylic wherever you find the lowest price. Other companies only sell complete kits through professional installers, but offer longer warranties.

For a buyer's guide of the 10 best interior storm window kits, frame/window materials, attachment methods, installation instructions and specs, write for Utility Bills Update No. 728 (or instantly download - www.dulley.com). Please include \$2.00 and a business-size SASE. Contact James Dulley, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 54987, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

James Dulley is a syndicated columnist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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to do RIGHT

Mental Blocks

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Unscramble!

By Hank Smith

Gardening is good, low-cost therapy

Gardening is much more than digging a hole and planting a seed. To some it is the best source of nutritious food. To others, it is tonic for the soul. Therapists recognize gardening as one of the best means of releasing tension – both mental and physical. To dedicated gardeners it often means \$3 to \$5 per hour for time involved — a well-paying hobby. Landscape gardening includes creativeness and self-expression on the grounds surrounding the home. Whatever the reason for gardening, one receives more than food for the table.

Planting trees and shrubs

Heading the list of January's garden chores is the planting of trees and shrubs. This takes top priority as long as plants remain dormant. Plant all types of deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs. For variety, try hollies. Different types range from 1 to 60 feet in height – with foliage varying from broad and showy to small and fine-textured. Hollies bear berries that are red, black or yellow. It is usually advisable to mulch newly planted trees and shrubs and perennials when hard freezes are in the forecast. Covering with pine straw protects most tender bedding plants. Mulching also aids in preventing excessive drying of soil.

Black plastic heat

Last year's compost pile will accelerate in decomposition if covered with a sheet of black plastic that traps the heat.

Winter watering

During winter months, water gardens in early morning. This allows excess moisture to be absorbed before nightfall, thus reducing the incidence of fungus diseases. An incorrect notion of new gardeners is that as long as the sky is overcast or temperatures are low, it is not necessary to water. But cold, dry wind is damaging to plants – it rapidly removes moisture from the soil and plant tissues. The only way to know if a plant needs water is to judge the actual condition of the soil. When in doubt, scrape off 4 to 6 inches of topsoil. If topsoil is dry, watering is needed.

Holiday plants

Those special flowering plants used for holiday decorations will last much longer if we meet their needs for light, moisture and proper temperature. Flowering plants should be placed in bright light during the day – preferably a sunny window. They appreciate cool room at night. Check daily to be certain they do not suffer from dry soil. Using water of room temperature, keep soil moist but not wet.

Soil tests

Curing the lull in active plant growth, make soil tests of lawn and garden areas. Contact your local County Extension Office for assistance. After taking soil samples to be sent to the testing laboratory, include a note about plants growing on the site or plants you desire to grow there. Most lawn grasses perform best on soil that is slightly acid – but they do not make good healthy growth if soil is too acid. Lime is the material most commonly used to correct soil acidity. Soil structure and texture, the organic content and existing pH value determine the amount of lime needed. Light soils require less than heavy soils. The pH scale runs from 0 to 14, with 7 being neutral (neither acid nor alkaline). Values below 7 indicate acidity. A reading above 7 indicate alkalinity.

Midwinter spraying

If you are not a gardener who is opposed to the use of chemicals, apply midwinter miscible and

emulsifiable sprays to fruit trees and several ornamental plants. Spraying now will payoff in summer's production of peaches, plums, flowering almonds and lilacs. Never apply spray when temperature is below 40 degrees for the first night following application. Oil sprays may be applied any time before buds swell in the spring, depending upon temperatures. Maples, walnuts, beeches and flowering cherries should never be treated with oil sprays, winter or summer, as these trees are easily damaged by oil.

Prune soon

Sometimes ill-placed shrubs need to be pruned back to make them "fit and suit" their space. In most cases, a well-placed shrub will be effective in landscape if pruned only to remove dead or diseased wood. Shrubs that flower in late summer may be pruned now, without the risk of cutting away flowering wood. Among these are crape myrtle, oleander in coastal areas, vitex, althea, eleagnus and Buddleia (butterfly bush). Buddleia can be cut back severely, to within a few inches of the ground if the plant is badly overgrown. When pruning shrubs, make a slanting cut just beneath a leaf that shields a growth bud. The slant prevents moisture from collecting at the cut, which can lead to disease growth. Pruning of established trees and large shrubs should be delayed until later winter or early spring, when plants will be putting forth new growth. Be careful in pruning a pine tree. If branches of a pine are shortened and there are no side branches left, the branch will die back to the trunk because no dormant living buds are present to provide growth.

Azalea accents

Try varying azalea plantings by selecting some of the late-flowering varieties, along with the standard Kurumes and Indicas. A few deciduous azaleas will add accent and foreground interest to evergreens. Should discolored leaves caused by chlorosis appear, spray or treat soil with iron chelates.

Choose wisely

The wise gardener realizes that there are handsome plants that are adapted to his or her area, and makes choices from these. He or she learns the cold hardy varieties, as well as those that respond poorly in the area. A successful garden employs plants that are adapted to the climate and soil of the area. Give them the required sun-shade exposure, proper fertilization, insect and disease control, and adequate soil moisture. In many cases, plants imported from out of the area will give poor growth response and often are disappointing.

Camellia transplanting care

Four important steps help assure that newly set camellias have a better chance at survival and healthy growth:

1. Set plant carefully, just as any other plant. Shallow-rooted camellias should be set 1 to 2 inches higher than previously growing to allow for settling of root ball in newly worked soil.
2. Mulch thoroughly.
3. Water when needed, even in cold weather.
4. Provide partial shade to prevent sunscald.

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These recipes could help a case of the winter blues. Try making these comfort foods on a cold winter day.

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For more Carolina Country recipes, visit Carolina Kitchen online: www.carolinacountry.com.

The subtle sweetness of this stew is a welcome change from "same-old" stews. Try it with biscuits, slices of apple and cheddar cheese.

Cider Beef Stew

2 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch cubes
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 cups apple cider
2 tablespoons cider vinegar
2 teaspoons salt, optional
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
1/4 teaspoon pepper
3 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
4 medium carrots, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
3 celery ribs, cut into 3/4 inch pieces
2 medium onions, cut into wedges
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup water

In a Dutch oven, brown beef in oil; drain. Add cider, vinegar, salt if desired, thyme and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for about an hour and fifteen minutes. Add the potatoes, carrots, celery and onions; return to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 30-35 minutes or until beef and vegetables are tender. Combine flour and water until smooth; stir into stew. Bring to a boil; boil and stir for 2 minutes. Yield: 8 servings.



It's impossible to eat only one of these delicious brownies. The fluffy melt-in-your-mouth top layer is heavenly.

Very Chocolate Brownies

4 squares (1 ounce each)
unsweetened chocolate
3/4 cup butter (no substitutes)
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts

Topping:

1 cup (6 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
1/4 cup water
2 tablespoons butter (no substitutes)
1 cup whipping cream, whipped

In a microwave or double boiler, melt chocolate and butter; cool for 10 minutes. Add sugar; mix well. Stir in eggs and vanilla. Add flour; mix well. Stir in the walnuts. Line a 13-by-9-by-2-inch baking pan with foil and grease the foil. Pour batter into pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out with moist crumbs (do not over-bake). Cool completely. For topping, melt chocolate chips, water and butter in a microwave or double boiler; stir until smooth. Cool to room temperature. Fold in whipped cream. Spread over brownies. Chill before cutting. Store leftovers in the refrigerator. Yield: 3 dozen.



Applesauce Muffins

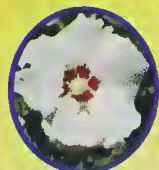
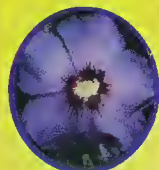
1 stick butter
1 cup sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon allspice
1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup pecans
1/2 cups applesauce

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Combine butter, sugar, egg and vanilla; mix well. Add dry ingredients, raisins, pecans, and applesauce. Pour into greased muffin tins, filling cups about 2/3 full. Bake in preheated oven for 10 minutes. Yields one dozen muffins.

This is a specialty recipe of the Yellow House on Plott Creek Road, a bed and breakfast in Waynesville, NC. Reprinted with permission.

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